

TRANSNATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL REPRODUCTION:  
GEORGIAN MIGRANT WOMEN IN TURKEY

by

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For my family members  
Relative and fictive  
Near and far...

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an ethnographic study of a small group of Georgian migrant women who work as live-in domestic labourers in Istanbul. Drawing from feminist political economy, and with the extended application of Marxist concepts, it aims to explore macro- and micro-structural circumstances which surround Georgian migrant women's entry into the feminized global labour force to sell their labour power in Turkey. Ethnographic data for this multi-sited study is collected by interviewing thirty-four informants, other anonymous participants, and from observations during the summer and winter months of 2016-2017 in Istanbul and Georgia. Through narratives of migration histories and from interviews about the daily lives of the study group, this dissertation represents a historically and culturally situated mapping of the trajectory of the commodification of Georgian migrant women's social reproductive labour. In parallel, it demonstrates the subjugating effects of contemporary neoliberal capitalism. Tracing the contours, content, and implications of their paid and unpaid work at household, nation state and transnational levels, it sheds light on the persistence of transnational reorganization, recalibration, redistribution, and reinterpretation of how social reproductive work contributes layers of benefit to capital accumulation. In this context, binational historical connections and each country's cultural practices are found to be sources of material and ideological conditions which ambivalently shape, constrict, and inform migrant women's agency.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEL	Georgian Lari
GURTIAD	Georgian-Turkish Businessmen Association
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LCP	Live-in-Caregiver Programme
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
SCMI	State Commission on Migration Issues -Georgia
TL	Turkish Lira
USD	U.S. Dollars
USSR	The Union of Soviet Socialist States

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

After the fall of Soviet Union in 1989, the European Union and Turkey have seen an influx of women migrants. Women from ex-socialist countries migrate for work in gendered job markets including sex work, domestic work, small scale trade, and to a lesser degree, in the manufacturing and the service sector (Keough, 2004, 2015; Kaska, 2006; Akalin, 2009; Bloch, 2017). They settle in various rhythms of migrations under mutable visa regimes. Migration in their case means a novel sustenance strategy developed in response to the effects of neoliberal policies which are felt as impoverishment in their own countries and job opportunities in the receiving countries.

This thesis studies a group of women who migrated from Georgia to Turkey to work as live-in domestic labourers after Georgia's independence from the Soviet Union under similar conditions to those described above. It is designed to examine the transforming aspects of regional and global political economic conditions which mutually shape and arise from Georgian women's migration. The study group's migration, work, and life experiences shed light on historically and culturally framed social relations which have been re-forming in and between Georgian and Turkish households under contemporary capitalism. Social relations are problematized through the lens of the social reproduction framework as used in a feminist political economy perspective. In this context, Georgian migrant women's daily activities are treated as waged and non-waged work which maintain life, which itself unfolds under conditions of differentiated access to production and social reproduction resources. My dissertation offers an analysis of an emerging class and set of class relations by following the extent and nature of

contestations around the distribution of social reproduction resources, and labour processes.

Taking cue from a contemporary conceptualization of “class” analysis, I turn the Marxist lens on women’s labour in the realm of social reproduction, and its critical contribution to the maintenance of capitalist accumulation and reproduction. For this purpose I rely on the framework of feminist political economy which specifically problematizes the invisibility of women in theoretical, economic, and policy related discussions. Working within this conceptual framework, this dissertation answers the following questions about Georgian migrant women: 1) Under what circumstances have they joined the international labour force as migrant labourers, 2) How is social reproductive labour power is reorganized, reallocated, and compensated, and 3) How are their social positions and identities being reconstructed as a result of their migration.

Turkey and Georgia are neighbouring countries in a geography where Asia and Europe merge. These two countries share a long history which factors into current bilateral legal, commercial, and social relations. They have mutual economic and political pasts, as well as different moments and ways of joining the global market which are reflected in the dynamics of the organization of previous and current production systems and relations. Together, these specific circumstances manifest themselves in Georgian migrant women’s migration patterns, processes and rhythms, working conditions and relations, and their position as labourers in households and labour markets. This study thus represents a certain new articulation of class relations against the background of this historical and contemporary account of shifting political economies.

A feminist perspective guides this research project. The project seeks to understand how capitalist economic policies have produced gendered effects and

responses, and it does so through the use of feminist methodology. Taking its cue from feminist standpoint theory which asserts that women of a certain (marginalized) socio-political location provide a privileged epistemological insight for knowledge building (Harding, 2004), this research relies on Georgian migrant women's own accounts of work, life and migration. In tandem, feminist standpoint theory allows for analysis of multi-scaled power relations and oppressive structures experienced, and challenged, from a particular gendered location that is historically and socially meaningful (Harding, 2004). Relatedly, it becomes possible to capture and account for a myriad of gendered agential responses to specific micro and macro structures. Ethnographic research is used to map the standpoint of Georgian migrant women. With the application of feminist political economy framework, individual and collective standpoints are analyzed with reference to historical and cultural social formations which have been extending between multiple nation states in the region, including Turkey, Georgia and Russia.

Information on Georgian migrant women's local and transnational daily lives was collected by interviews and observations during the summer and winter of 2016-2017 in Istanbul and Georgia. These data were simultaneously triangulated with document and literature review, and later contextualized in relation to the literature on global patterns of gendered migrations. The ethnographic nature of this study conveys the daily work and struggles of Georgian migrant women under the regulatory and hierarchizing effects of economic, political and cultural structures which oversee the appropriation, accumulation and distribution of resources and value. Such an account of daily life experiences, presented through the conceptual lens of social reproduction, reveals the role of customarily dominant gender relations and ideologies which shape migrant women's expansion of paid and unpaid labour. In this context, the contours and layers of benefit

that is appropriated from Georgian migrant women's labour are revealed. This study further discloses Georgian migrant women's agency in making use of, and giving meaning to the resources and opportunities available to them under these structural constrictions.

Georgian migrant women are part of a globally noticeable trend: the international migration of women in a gender segregated global labour market. Recent neoliberal economic policies around the globe have led to the feminization of jobs and careers, and as a consequence, to the generalization of women's work to an internationally feminized working class (Hartsock, 2006). These neoliberal policies were implemented in the early 1980s following the "energy crisis" of the 1970s (or capitalism's overaccumulation crisis, Harvey, 2003; or "the recession of 1974-75", Sweezy, 1997, p. 3) and the nature and consequences of their implementation in the re-organization of capitalist production and social reproduction relations have been a key point of focus for political economy scholars. Through various theoretical lenses, political economists have outlined the shift from state managed economy to free markets, which paralleled increased inequalities within and between nation states, as well as the denigration of working classes (Hartsock, 2006). At a global scale, Piper (2011) argues that the informalization, casualization and precariousness of work which are characteristics of current capitalism, negatively affect men's ability to find permanent employment in traditionally male dominated sectors. On the other hand, the increasing labour force participation of women across destination countries increases the need and demand for social and care related services in their home contexts. Migrant women, employed predominantly -although not exclusively- in the fields of domestic and care sectors, gendered entertainment, and sex work, have become of economic significance to families and nation-states as primary breadwinners and key

actors in the flow of global remittances. The international migration of women has captured the interest of migration scholars for some time. Among the most prominent documented examples are the outpouring of Filipina care and domestic workers to the world (Barber, 1997, 2008a,b, 2010; Constable, 2007; McKay, 2012; Parrenas, 2005). The prominence of migrant women and their vulnerable and precarious conditions in “fortress Europe” (Anderson, 2000, 2013; Lutz, 2011, Kofman, 2014; Zontini, 2010) have also been the object of scholarly attention. This scholarship, in general, suggest that women’s international migration is integrally related to the global restructuring of capital accumulation and social reproduction relations.

## **1.1. OVERVIEW OF THESIS**

Drawing from the theoretical framework of feminist political economy, this research focuses on how migrant women’s work constitutes -and is constituted by- the social reproduction needs of the contemporary global capitalism. It traces the structural and ideological conditions under which Georgian women migrate and carve new identities in a transnational space in relation to their families, employers, and other migrant groups. This endeavour takes place under the shadow of a long history of continuing relations between Georgian and Turkish populations, which is fraught with drastic shifts in the economic, political and social composition of the region. In order to capture the full extent of migrant women’s work, and of changing identities, a feminist political framework is supplemented and detailed by the use of Marxist concepts in each chapter.

The next chapter (*chapter two*) outlines the conceptual and methodological frameworks of this project. It provides a comprehensive review of the feminist political

economy theory and discusses key insights that the concept of social reproduction brings into the study of women's migration on a global scale. The second half of *chapter two* describes the multi-sited ethnographic research design and the accompanying methods of data collection and analysis which were deployed while conducting my research.

The following chapters are organized in two parts. The first part, consisting of *chapters three and four*, provide a historical and relatively macro-structural context to Georgian women's migration. The aim in these two chapters is to depict the specificities of the regional political economy and migrations which existed before and after the introduction of capitalist relations. They are an overview of historically vital events and ties which inform all aspects of contemporary migrations between Georgia and Turkey, from visa policies to the constitution and access of transnational networks. *Chapters five and six* constitute the second part and offer a more intimate, detailed analysis of migrants' daily lives. Still framed under macro-structural conditions, these chapters focus on households and examine the material and ideological parameters of migrant women's social reproductive labour power. By following migrants' interactions with their family members and their employers' family members on a daily basis, these two chapters reveal the content of cultural and behavioural negotiations as manifest of instances of social reproduction and bilateral nation state relations from a consequential past.

In particular, *chapter three* unravels the ways in which capitalist social relations were introduced to Georgia after the end of socialist social relations. This chapter is built on the Marxist concept of "primitive accumulation" (Marx, 1867/1990), which reflects the defining moment and processes of the commencement of capitalist accumulation. Contemporary applications of this concept are sensitive to gendered capitalist interventions and provide nuanced insight into specific shifts which occur in the

organization of production and social reproduction. A series of events that led to the commodification of Georgian labour and resources through economic, political and social policies are analyzed through an examination of patterns of cash generation and expenditure in Georgian families. I show how multifaceted and prolonged unrests and wars altered social reproduction relations and strategies at family, national and regional levels, and how, in turn, a new outmigration pattern from Georgia was established to meet new local and global capitalist social reproduction needs. This chapter depicts the moment of when and how Georgian families joined the global capitalist market.

*Chapter four* is an analysis of the transnational space between Turkey and Georgia of which Georgian women became a part of after their migration following the events described in *chapter three*. The contemporary transnational space reflects the contradictory and alternating experiences of alliances and wars between populations of the region, and the resulting migration management techniques. Using the Marxist conceptual lens of “conjunctures” (Hall, 1987) this chapter presents a list of landmark macro-structural events which shaped migrations and transnational social spaces over a span of several centuries. This focus helps uncover the contemporary articulations of social divisions such as class, gender, and generation, which are constructed and reproduced in the contemporary transnational space as a result of historical shifts in the regional political economy. These cleavages find meaning in Georgian women’s migration narratives, are sustained through transnational networks, and visa policies, and ultimately inform and support the marginalized location of migrant women in the lower echelons of the labour force serving regional and global capital accumulation.

I adjust the social reproduction analytical lens to capture the micro-structural in *chapters five and six*. In *chapter five*, I scrutinize Georgian migrant women’s

relationships with their family members and the characteristics and rhythms of their care towards their families while they are in Istanbul. Based on the fundamental premises of social reproduction theory, this chapter shows the material and ideological mechanisms through which women's social reproductive labour is appropriated and devalorized for the maintenance of a cheap labour force in Georgia. A detailed literature review here reveals the far-ranging tensions that women's migration evoke around the world be it for (migration) scholars, families, public imagination and policies, or for the women themselves. I then depict a set of cultural identities and specific gender ideologies, along with kinship, co-habitation (shared living arrangements) and (family) budgeting practices constructed around "in-law-hood" that sustain a strict gendered division of labour in the families of the study group, which were also practiced under the socialist regime. Georgian migrant women's transnational practices ascertain that, although this pre-capitalist kinship system was shaken and reshaped by recent capitalist requirements, migrant women continue in their efforts to uphold it. To do so requires striking a fine balance of contestations and negotiations around commitment, expectations, and obligations, as well as a reworking of interpretations of Georgian women's position in families, communities, and in the transnational space which spans between Georgia and Turkey. The chapter thus illustrates the (re)articulation of meanings attached to the daily transnational activities of Georgian migrant women geared towards their families in the contemporary political economy under the influences of locally and transnationally shaped cultures.

The *sixth chapter* is on migrant women's social reproductive labour in its commodified form, in Turkish homes. This chapter also depicts contestations and negotiations around women's social reproductive labour in households, between



employers and employees, which are again informed by cultural and historical contexts. Through the lens of “labour process theory”, consent and dissent around chores, wages, and living conditions are analyzed within a framework of exploitation and resistance. As Georgian migrant women sell their labour power in a family-like setting, cultural expectations and interpretations, as well as migration policies are found to determine the ways and extents of negotiations. Read together, *chapters five and six* attest to layers of devalorization of women’s labour, both at home and at work, and both locally and transnationally. These chapters are an account of how social reproduction relations are organized within and across transnational households under contemporary capitalism, reshaping a collection of region-specific historical and cultural motifs.

From an overarching perspective, my study represents a contemporary class analysis, as discussed in the introduction part of this chapter. Each chapter of the thesis follows the changes in livelihood practices of Georgian migrant women and their families as a result of Georgia’s transition from one political economy (socialist, with elements of market economy) and social relations to another political economy by way of Georgia’s differentiated incorporation to the global neoliberal capitalist system. The particulars of class relations and struggles, that is, for the procurement of daily life, and social reproduction under socialist production (and appropriation) system, and their alterations in response to capitalist production, and exploitation system are discussed in *chapter three*, with the inclusion of local and transnational ramifications. *Chapter four* speaks to the (re)construction and crystallization of differences informed by historical, and contemporary material, and ideological political economic imperatives. Relatedly, transformed livelihood practices which encompass social relations and conflicts

surrounding the processes of social reproductive goals, and processes of wage generation, are presented in *chapters five and six* respectively.

The findings obtained through Georgian migrant women's migration, work, and family life narratives delineate the ways in which the distribution, structures, processes, and interpretations of social reproduction relations are reconfigured, and contested in Georgia and Turkey under contemporary capitalism. Participants' stories demonstrate that they struggle to fulfill their families' social reproductive needs by choosing among options which have become available to them under the current global capitalist system, such as taking on debt, following migration opportunities, and combining several livelihood practices. Migrant women also report resisting capitalist exploitation by undertaking everyday forms of resistance, and defiance in their domestic jobs. These struggles require challenging and reconstructing of (certain) gendered ideologies, and material conditions, which are informed by local and transnational cultural social formations, as well as major historical political economic shifts. Concurrently, the findings outline the mechanisms through which Georgian migrant women contribute to global capital accumulation by providing and reproducing cheap labour force, and then securing the continuation of gendered division of labour in local and transnational spaces, materially and ideologically, and generationally. In other words, through investing into the upholding of the social structures which reinforce gendered division of labour, Georgian migrant women set the stage for the further reproduction of unequal capitalist production and reproduction relations.

## 1.2. CONTRIBUTIONS

This dissertation addresses a gap in the literature by focusing on an understudied group of women migrants. In Turkey, ex-Soviet women have been in the labour force, homes and public imaginary for more than three decades, yet there have been only a few studies published on them, and even fewer so on specific nationalities. Among the ethnographic works exploring the lives of migrant women from ex-socialist countries in Turkey are those of Ayse Akalin (2007, 2009, 2015) on domestic labourers, and those of Alexia Bloch (2003, 2011, 2018) on women who worked in petty trade, sex work, and the domestic sector. Leyla Keough published work on Moldovan (trafficked or not) women in Istanbul (2004; 2015), while there are also a few singular studies on foreign domestic and entertainment sector labourers in Turkey (Kaska, 2006; Danis, 2007). None of these studies have specifically problematized the case of Georgian migrant women. Studies on women emigrants from Georgia are mostly based on statistical analyses of outmigration's effects on households (Torosyan, Gerber & Gonalons-Pons, 2015); on the experiences of returnees (Hofmann & Buckley, 2012) or the aspirations of migrants to be (Hofmann, 2015). Although some of these studies use a transnational lens, none focuses on the bilateral historical (or contemporary) connections between Georgia and Turkey, or on Georgian migrant women's transnational experiences, work and living conditions, and changing family relations while they are away. In this context, my study foreshadows the agency of Georgian migrant women in detail. Their agency is analyzed in connection with micro and macro structures which condition their economic, social, and subjective positions. Agency is revealed in migrants' workplace struggles and decisions about migration. More categorically, in order to support their families, the participants elected to travel to Turkey, a disreputable country, usually in defiance of their families' wishes.

Furthermore, once in Turkey, they strived for better working conditions in Turkish households by strategically relying on and increasing the extent of resources available to them.

By way of presenting Georgian migrant women in Turkey as a case study, my project is a contribution to the feminist political economy literature in various respects. The focus is on a geographical location outside of dominant literature on migrant women, with regards to both sending and receiving countries. Notwithstanding exceptions, examples to the former include migration of women from the Philippines, Indonesia and sub-continent countries, Latin America, and to an extent, ex-socialist countries located in Europe. On the receiving end are the traditional immigration countries, such as the United States of America, Canada and Australia, and again to an extent, Hong Kong due to the presence there of a large group of migrant domestic labourers. Therefore, this study elucidates a special set of political, economic and social structures, as well as historical and contemporary social relations, which have not been explored before. By extension, it chronicles a local and regional articulation of the global reach of capitalism in the aftermath of socialism's collapse.

Analytically, my dissertation strengthens and diversifies the application of feminist political economy by further elaborating Marxist concepts to understand and document the formation of Georgian women as a class of migrant domestic labourers in Turkey. It expands the scholarship on women's migration and social reproduction under global capitalism by shedding light on migrant women's contributions in supporting and shaping current and future social reproduction relations which crystallize around a local and transnational gendered division of labour. Local and transnational social reproduction relations depicted in this project indicate their calibration for value

generation under neoliberal economic policies. Relatedly, the thesis shows the multiple ways in which Georgian migrant women's paid and unpaid social reproductive work benefit capital accumulation. As workers, migrant women are a source of surplus value which is extracted not only in the context of migration policies and labour market regulations, but also by employers during the domestic labour process itself. Their labour power supports the reproduction of their own families as a cheap labour force in Georgia, while adding to their employers' class standing. Remittances that are sent to Georgia constitute an increasingly significant portion of Georgia's national budget. Moreover, Georgian women use official and unofficial transnational and global migration industry organizations for their transnational undertakings, while also bolstering global finance capital via their debt repayments.

## CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the theoretical and methodological frameworks which guide the study. I first outline the central tenets of class analysis and its contemporary applications. Following this, I explicitly connect class analysis and feminist political economy theory, and situate my study in relation to them. The final section delineates the philosophical and methodological origins which inform data collection and analysis. Throughout these sections, I present a synthesis of key theorists' scholarship for the corresponding framework. To conclude the chapter I describe the specifics of my fieldwork, and introduce the study group.

### 2.1. CLASS ANALYSIS

This dissertation elucidates emerging class relations on the heels of socialism's demise and its replacement with capitalism in the Caucasus region, under the shadow of historical effects of past political economies. A discussion of how capitalism(s) is established and sustained is covered in the following chapters (especially in *chapters three and four*). Drawing from Kalb, I treat "emerging class relations" as "people's shifting historical, situated, and antagonistic social interdependencies" (Kalb, 2015, p. 16). This relational and processual understanding of class still rests on the Marxist study of society and capitalism where economic activity is viewed as the central organizing and stratifying factor in societies, and where the latter is determined by individuals' access (the bourgeoisie) or not (the proletariat) to the means of production. The continuation (reproduction) of this systemic inequity is secured not only through material exploitation of the proletariat, but also through propagation of normalization ideologies and regulation

of different spheres of social life ranging from cultural, kinship, and political formations, and practices, to symbolic differentiations across social groups along the lines of gender, race, ethnicity and the like. Capitalism, simultaneously conceptualized as a mode of production, a mode of accumulation, and a model of social reproduction (Kalb, 2015, p. 14), has changed over time, and space resulting in complex variations of classes. Class, in contemporary modern capitalist societies represents the general social nature of economic stratification determined by individuals' diverse, and changing degrees, and prospects of access, and control over different aspects of production, and social reproduction resources. It connotes competition, and struggle for survival and/or improvement of subsistence acquisition, well-being, and living standards which are evaluated in relation to the past, present, and future (ibid, p. 16). Flowing from this, such conceptualization of class takes class struggle to happen in other fronts outside of points of production (Kalb, 2000). Furthermore, it sheds light on the ways in which local social forms, relations, and struggles are distinctively (re)articulated, whether in the global south or north, in response to global capitalism's structuring effects which is characterized by dynamic and continuous rearrangement of social groups and their resources (Kalb, 2000). In short, it is through the lens of class that it becomes possible to "perceive, and make sense of the interlocking exploitative, extractive, uneven, and constantly transformative relational antagonisms that fire up and refuel the variable engines of global capitalism" (Kalb, 2015, p.13).

## **2.2. FEMINIST POLITICAL ECONOMY**

The conditions and outcomes of Georgian women's migration and labour are explored through the perspective of feminist political economy which emphasizes the integral nature of production and social reproduction relations, and women's distinct role in maintaining individual and collective lives. Feminist political economy has emerged as a critique of broader political economy theory and literature, and more recently, as a critique of neoliberal capitalism. The scholarship of feminist political economy builds on Marxist theory, particularly its conception that capitalism, as a system complete with economic, institutional and cultural components, prioritizes the accumulation of surplus (Fraser, 2017). While political economy examines social relations around the production, distribution and consumption of resources in the context of capitalism's differentiated spread (Roseberry, 1998), feminists have re-centered the Marxist lens on women, specifically by problematizing the invisibility of women in theoretical, economic, and policy related discussions. They have thus expanded on what counts as production, resources, social divisions, and market and class relations. This approach further outlines the nature and consequences of gender inequalities at family, state and international levels within the reach of expanding capitalism.

Inspired by the ultimate goal of eliminating oppression and exploitation, feminist political economists draw attention to the constitutive effects of sexism and racism, as well as other categories of oppression, in the subordination of women within production and social reproduction relations (Luxton, 2006, p. 23). Feminist political economy scholars study the latter relations as dialectic and proceed by uncovering the influence of local, national and global governing regimes as well as for-profit enterprises which mediate these relations (Roseman, Barber & Neis, 2015). They pay equal attention to



material and ideological conditions, particularly those that determine men's and women's roles ascribed by social norms and reflected in policies and practices (Luxton, 2006). This framework builds on a scholarship which has studied women's subordinated position in capitalism by exploring gendered division of labour and the various levels of structures which maintain it. The latest focus of this scholarship falls on the intersecting systems of domination such as race, migrant status, ability, and so forth emerging from studies of women, the law, the welfare state (Vosko, 2002) as well as the globalized transfer of (social reproductive) work via gendered global migrations (Kofman, 2014).

Early feminist critiques argued that classical political economy focused mostly on economic and political macrostructures, such as state policies and industrial production (Bakker & Gill, 2008) and, that it was fundamentally gender blind (Vosko, 2002). Feminist attention in these respects uncovered several conceptual problems in Marxist theory with relation to women's situation under capitalism. Feminist theorists fundamentally questioned the "division of labour" as a concept. They pointed that whether utilized by Durkheim, Marx and Engels, or Adam Smith, this concept fit squarely into the context of the production of commodities, or more accurately into "relations of production", excluding the social reproduction processes carried out by women from any consideration of surplus or exchange analyses. They brought a gendered division of labour into focus. Thus, research in the 1960s and 1970s concentrated on the contribution of women's unpaid labour in households to capital accumulation by way of reproducing and maintaining the labour force (Kofman, 2014). In this scholarship, various labour processes involved in domestic housekeeping have been demonstrated (for example, Luxton, 1980). Consequent studies revealed women's experiences in labour markets. These studies indicated that increased participation in the labour force did not radically

alter women's subordinated position in societies of the global North nor of socialist countries (Molyneux, 1981). In response, socialist feminists turned their attention to considerations other than material and/or economic determinants for the maintenance of gendered division of labour, namely power differentials between men and women in social structures, such as family and kinship relations (Mckintosh, 1981). In this line of work, one ideological underpinning they exposed was the constructed distinction between "productive" and "non-productive" (domestic) activities which rendered men's and women's work non-comparable for Marxist analyses (Edholm, Harris & Young, 1978). Having been built on an essentialist association of women's labour to nature, socialist feminists contended, the divide rendered women's labour "non-productive", invisible and devalorized at homes, in labour markets, and in Marxist theory.

It is important to note that the debate between Marxist and socialist feminists are ongoing and that contemporary feminist political economy theory has grown out of these debates. The debates revolved around how to position women's work in relation to the mode of production but are no longer central in feminist political economy theory (Vosko, 2002). From a traditional Marxist perspective, Engels (1884/2000) argued that the institution of capitalism implemented men's control over private property and wealth, and by extension, over women's bodies and labour -as a class-, to assure the transfer of wealth to men's own offspring. This view found resonance with Marxist feminists who then sought to prove that women's domestic labour is "productive" work rather than "reproductive" work and that it actually generated "surplus value". Socialist feminists, on the other hand, were concerned about the persisting inequalities in the labour market and sought to uncover the patriarchal underpinnings of these inequalities which nuanced simple understandings of "surplus value" aligned solely with production and paid labour.

Furthermore, social reproduction theory (which will be further explained in the next section) proved to be a more suitable theoretical tool for illuminating the articulation between productive and social reproductive labour under capitalism. According to Armstrong (2020), contemporary Marxist feminists seek to reveal the ways in which capitalist production mobilizes social reproduction for capital accumulation and visualize women's emancipation in collective class struggle, while socialist feminists highlight the key role of patriarchal values in the stabilization of capitalist relations of production and reproduction relations, and see women's emancipation in a feminist revolutionary struggle which draws from an integral theory of "patriarchal capitalism" (pp. 14-15). Against this backdrop, my study draws from socialist feminist theorization in that it exposes the role of certain patriarchal structures and associated subjective values in the exploitation of Georgian migrant women's waged and non-waged social reproductive labour power. This study also draws from Marxist concepts to analyze the power relations during the commodification of migrant women's domestic labour power.

Feminist political economy literature has developed by including studies on women's position as waged and non-waged workers across different geographies and time periods. In line with this view, feminist political scholars take historical and cultural specificity to be central in theoretical and methodological interests (Luxton, 2006). Acknowledging anthropological findings which has shown that gendered divisions of labour did not always result in women's subordination, feminist scholars accept women's oppression and exploitation to emerge out of specific forms of social organization (Blumberg, 1979). This analytical attention enables examining the roles of diverse social structures, and their underpinning philosophies, and practices, in reproducing life and social structures themselves. In this respect, tracing the effects of neoliberal restructuring

on women's positions across the global south and north, research has shown the ways in which state provisions and labour markets have changed to accommodate globalizing, mobile, and multiple forms of capitals' needs. This body of research has emphasized the role of political and economic institutions, including the states and markets, which reflect shifting capitalist aims, in shaping life and work both inside and outside households (Fraser, 2017; Bhattacharya, 2017). Findings from these studies have further suggested that social reproduction relations in homes, societies and across regions of the world have changed under similar global neoliberal conditionings but in differentiated ways (Bakker & Gill, 2019). As such then, feminist political economy accepts neoliberal capitalism as a material and ideological force of capital accumulation and women's subordination, which unfolds across the globe in interaction with existing material ideological conditions of production and social reproduction across nation states.

Before I turn to a deeper discussion of social reproduction, a few remarks are in order with regards to gender orders in Turkey and Georgia to contextualize the rather more binary understanding of gender roles and identities depicted in this thesis. Taken as a socially constructed sets of meaning around biological sexes, gender refers to sets of practices and discourses which organize thoughts, expected behaviours, social structures (institutionalized or otherwise), and power relations in societies (Mahler & Pessar, 2006). Theorized to be dynamic processes by feminist scholars, these practices and discourses are continuously negotiated, and contested, thus re-constructed, across micro and macro structures. Gender, and gender relations, are also articulated differentially across various social hierarchies, such as race, ethnicity, nationality and class, in addition to (re)casted through time (historically) and space (culturally) (Zinn, Hondagneu-Sotelo, Messner, & Denissen, 2016). Although still problematizing men and women's positions in local and

global scales at a more general level, recent scholarship in gender studies provide a fuller and inclusive depiction of sexual and gender identities, and relations. It does so by stepping out of a “binary” understanding of gender which consist of two opposing categories of “male” versus “female”, and by highlighting the relational dimensions of various “masculinities” and “femininities” which simultaneously speak to other dimensions of power differentials (Zinn, Hondagneu-Sotelo, Messner, & Denissen, 2016, p. 6). When evaluated in relation to this scholarship, my study sheds light on the contested and restructured nature of gender ideologies, structures, and relations, across women of different nationalities and cultures which occupy differentiated local and transnational class positions. At the same time, it deploys a rather binary description of femininity and masculinity, in line with participants’ views which reflect dominant binary gender conceptualizations found in Georgian and Turkish public, and political practices, and discourses. Being mindful of the fact that these two countries have had distinctive (although relational) cultural and political-economic histories, my research revealed parallel ideologies and practices which rested on essentialized, and binary gender concepts -albeit increasingly contested- in both countries. Both in Turkey and Georgia, for example, gay marriage is not legally allowed, and anti-discrimination policies do not specifically address discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity (for Turkish case and its contestations see Engin, 2015; for Georgia see Gvianishvili, 2018). Furthermore, identities who fall outside of these binaries are frequently subjugated to existing essentialized ideals where, for instance, gay men are expected to act and behave as “women” do (ibid, ibid). An ideal of heterosexual family where gender roles are rather scrupulously defined is reflected in institutional policies, daily practices, as well as labour markets. Gender constructs are generally essentialized in the sense that women are

expected to take care of family members (emotionally and physically), and be submissive, while men are expected to have control over family, and finances, including women's labour market participation (Ozeygin, 2001 for Turkey; Hofmann, 2014 for Georgia -both these scholars also argue that these expectations may operate independently of actual rates of women's labour market participation or income levels). More on the specifics of gender constructs, relations, and negotiations within and between Turkish and Georgian households and societies will be presented in *chapter five* and *chapter six*.

### 2.2.1. Social Reproduction and Global Migrations

*[social reproduction] offers a framework that puts gender at the heart of modes of production, puts biological reproduction and its social and cultural realizations at the heart of social life, and attends to the labour involved in the production of life. But it does so without foreclosing investigation about the cultural forms through which different genders are articulated in any society (Luxton, 2006, p.35).*

Social reproduction, a central concept in feminist political economy scholarship, originally builds on the concept of "reproduction" (Marx, 1867, 1990, p. 711-724). According to Marx, every production process, no matter which social form it takes, has to be continuous, thus renewed; making "every social process of production (...) at the same time a process of reproduction" (p. 711). Reproduction happens under the same conditions of production and entails replacement and upkeep of the means of production. It further means the maintenance and reproduction of the labourer, by way of wages, so that s/he can replenish and continue selling his or her labour power under exploitative conditions (p.716). Moreover, the workers, more than just being instruments of

production (p. 719), need to reproduced as a class by way of handing down of skills from one generation to the next as well as in relation to the capitalist class (p. 724).

The theoretical framework of social reproduction builds on the fact that capitalism cannot be maintained without labour power, which capitalism itself cannot produce. In this process, the centrality of labour to capitalism is essential because labour power is a unique commodity and source of “surplus value” (Marx, 1867/1990) which needs to be exploited for capitalist accumulation to continue. Capitalists appropriate surplus value from labourers mainly during the production processes. This is accomplished either by stretching or intensifying the workday (absolute surplus) or by adopting technological changes to increase labour productivity (relative surplus) (Marx, 1867/1990). Put together, the labourer produces more value than what is compensated through wages, and this surplus value constitutes the basis of capital accumulation.

(Re)production of the labour force itself was not adequately addressed by Marx. The feminist political economy scholarship’s initial critiques of Marxist theory focused on the following basic points: a) reproduction of labour force is realized by women’s uncompensated and/or devalorized labour power, and b) the labour force, or working class, that need to be reproduced is differentiated along gender, as well as, racial, ethnic and other divisions. These critiques suggest other, or (rather) invisible, ways of securing surplus value on the part of capitalists, mainly from women’s labour in the maintenance and reproduction of a cheap labour force and also in the maintenance and reproduction of social divisions and hierarchizations which facilitates and magnifies the extraction of surplus value. Therefore, a feminist social reproduction concept expands the Marxist analytical lens which only concerns itself with the appropriation of surplus value in the context of production processes.

Based on Marx's conceptualization, and mending the missing link between tapping into surplus value only in production and tapping into value in all populations and resources, feminist political economy scholars have been building on the following definition of social reproduction advanced by Laslett and Brenner (1989):

Social Reproduction includes how food, clothing and shelter are made available for immediate consumption, the ways in which the care and socialization of children are provided, the care of the infirm and elderly, and the social organization of sexuality. Social Reproduction can thus be seen to include various kinds of work, mental, manual and emotional –aimed at providing the historically and socially as well as biologically defined care necessary to maintain existing life and to reproduce the next generation. (Laslett & Brenner, 1989, p. 382-383)

This definition provides several points of entry to investigate how production and social reproduction relations are intertwined. Most obvious in this definition is the expansion of labour power, whether waged or non-waged, for the immediate maintenance of the labour force. It brings into focus the quotidian tasks to be completed in a day, such as domestic chores of cleaning, cooking, and shopping as labour processes. It holds waged and non-waged work in analytical balance as they are used to secure the necessary resources for household social reproduction. This definition incorporates a projection, and aspirations towards the future because it considers the socialization of children and elder care.

Furthermore, it analytically allows the deliberation of social structures such as labour markets and consumption markets, family and kinship relations, and cultural norms which shape and accord meaning to the ways in which social reproductive resources and labour is distributed.



Relatedly, theorists who work with the framework of social reproduction underline three dimensions in social reproduction, building on Edholm, Harris, & Young's (1978) early work: 1. Biological reproduction, 2. Reproduction of the labour force, which refers to the empirical activities of day to day replenishment of the labour force and the allocation of workers within the labour process over time; and 3. Social or societal (the latter: Bhattacharya, 2017) reproduction which refers to the reproduction of structures including its class, gender, racial, and other discriminatory and exploitative orders and relationships. The conditions of social reproduction include culturally informed social norms which, on the one hand hold families, and societies together, while on the other, determine who is to be excluded or disciplined. By the same token, it involves the systems of production and affirmation of consent for capitalist social relations (Bhattacharya, 2017).

Extending on the second and third dimensions, Kofman (2014) stresses that social reproduction involves other institutions beside families. She elaborates that in contemporary societies, various aspects of the above mentioned three dimensions are realized through a "care diamond" consisting of: 1) family and/or households, 2) the market and the private sector, 3) the state at different levels, and 4) community organizations. These institutional sites interact with each other in support of individual and societal social reproduction. For instance, schools and daycares, which may be private or state funded, are such fundamental sites where children are physically maintained and socialized into societal positions. Among other considerations in this regard are health care systems, leisure facilities, and pension and benefits, which themselves are based on historically determined habits (Bhattacharya, 2017). Flowing from this, according to Kofman (2014), a social reproduction lens encompasses the ways

in which different kinds of social reproductive labour processes are performed, designated and organized across different social groups and institutions. It creates a prospect for capturing the calibrated assignments of social reproductive activities to household versus non-household members. Furthermore, it becomes possible to discern how changes in patterns of macro-structural organization of social reproduction effect micro-structural level patterns of social reproduction, such as individual family members' daily waged and non-waged activities.

As mentioned earlier, contemporary feminist political economy recognizes the neoliberal characteristics of the latest uneven global expansion of capitalism, and thus applies the concept of social reproduction to encompass a global perspective and explain the formation of a differentiated global labour force. Flowing from this, this lens focuses on how global capitalist production relies on, and shapes local and global social divisions, as well as how these divisions are articulated within and across different levels of social reproduction relations. These effects are best observed in the global migrant labour force, which is patterned gender-wise, and hierarchized racially and ethnically.

Over the last thirty years, researchers have been preoccupied with the growing number of women migrants in the context of the globalization of social reproduction. This scholarship, mostly focusing on the migration of women as care-givers, has shed light on the commodification and globalization of domestic and care labour (Arat-Koc, 1989; Barber, 1997; Hochschild, 2000; Piper, 2008). They have demonstrated a pattern of globally hierarchized access to care, and by extension to social reproduction resources, in the context of global transfers of care and its associated reproductive labour. Studies have shown the ways in which value is extracted from migrant labourers in the domestic and

care sectors, and the ways in which gendered inequality (rooted in the sexual division of labour) is reproduced through globalized care arrangements.

Research concentrations in this area are multi-scalar in terms of levels of analysis and geography. They cover a range of material, ideological, and historical issues. For instance, Sassen (2000) adopts a macro-structural perspective in examining the position of migrant women labourers in developed countries' labour markets. She highlights the increasing numbers of women emigrants from developing countries and draws parallels between global economic restructuring and women's migration trajectories. These women migrate to developed countries to work in feminine sectors as prostitutes, nurses, brides, cleaners and domestic servants. Sassen (2000) argues that the tools of global neoliberal capitalism, such as structural adjustment policies imposed on developing countries, create the macro-economic conditions of heavy government debt, collapsed national labour markets, and decreased government social provisions. The result is what she calls the "feminization of survival" (p.506) where developing country governments and families, and international for-profit organizations (clandestine or not) bank on migrant women's as waged labourers in a globalized "service class" (p. 510).

Assessing the consequences of the commodification of care across care labour migrations, Hochschild (2000) uses the formulation of "global care chains" to explain the commodification of migrant women's labour who work as domestic and care sector labourers, and outlines the transfer of care and love as surplus from developing households in developing countries to those in developed countries. In her thesis, Hochschild (2000) explains a series of links which connect and hierarchize women across the globe around the provisioning of care. At the higher end of this hierarchy are women employers of developed countries. The middle ring of the chain is the migrant labourer,

while at the lowest end are the women who take care of migrant labourers' children and family members. This chain upholds and expands a gendered division of labour globally, generates racialized class divisions among women, and yields to a void of love and care among children of developing countries (Hochschild, 2000).

The nature and mechanics of globally gendered and racialized migration pattern become more evident when different sites of social reproduction, and various related regulatory bodies are considered. In this vein, Yeates (2012), based on her research on the historical and contemporary global migration of nurses, suggests that migrant care labour is found in institutional settings such as hospitals, nursing homes and nurseries as well as the households of more developed countries. The transnationalization of care and associated labour migration in the contemporary context is mediated by professional, profit and non-profit, state and non-state organizations which valorize, regulate and distribute care resources, skills and labour. The impacts can be found in recruitment to and regulation of access to the sector, care worker's rights, and the contours of labour processes, and the ways in which intersecting social divisions of gender, class, age/generation, race and ethnicity (p.142) are articulated in policies, labour markets, and social relations (Yeates, 2012).

Similar state and non-state agency produced policies and regulations, and their role in a globally rooted rearrangement of social reproduction activities have also been reported in Europe (Anderson, 2000). These regulations manipulate and sustain the material domination of the receiving country over sending countries and that of the employer over migrant workers in households, particularly magnifying the live-in caregivers' exploitation and oppression (Anderson, 2000). The consequences are the development of antagonistic statuses based on gendered and racialized class positions,

and accompanying class subjectivities: that of the higher-class woman on one hand and that of the lower class, racialized, precarious women on the other (Anderson, 2000). On the same topic, again in Europe, Lutz (2011) brings an alternative perspective. She demonstrates that, in Germany, it is precisely the lack of state policies on immigration and recruitment of migrant domestic labourers that render them more precarious. These migrants' condition is characterized by "multiple illegality" (p. 188) where they don't have residence or work permits, and have to work under conditions with no access to social insurance, retirement or sickness benefits. Following this imposed precarity, class, race and nationality are being constructed in relation to domestic work and care, and shape the outsourcing preferences of middle/higher class employers, and migrant women's employment opportunities in Europe (Lutz, 2011).

Going back to the governing systems, these are found to mitigate the temporal, spatial and institutional organization of social reproduction in and across societies and set the tone in establishing the supporting normative orders to further capitalist aims (Fraser, 2017). Canadian scholars have shown the global restructuring of social reproduction as a result of neoliberal policies from the perspective of a migrant receiving country. For instance, studies on the implementation of the Live-in-Caregiver programme (LCP, which is now terminated) indicate how Canadian immigration policies generate and control migration in specific, and classed ways, and shape migrants' employment and working conditions to facilitate capital accumulation (Barber, 2008a). Introduction of the LCP came on the heels of a series of neoliberal reforms in the 1980s and 1990s in Canada, which resulted in cuts to social welfare provisions. These reforms created a crisis in the fulfillment of social reproduction needs of Canadian families, which put increased demand on Canadian women's labour (Bezanson, 2006; Cameron, 2006; LeBaron, 2010).

The LCP allowed Canadian women and the Canadian state to outsource their reproductive responsibilities. Initially, this programme did not allow migrant employees to change employers, and provided visas for a limited period of time with no prospect for family reunification or citizenship. Arat-Koc (2006) based on her work on the implications of the LCP and reflecting on the continuing presence of migrant women in the Canadian domestic sector, discerns several trends of globalization in Canada's social reproduction strategy. She asserts that through discriminatory and temporary immigration programmes, the state privatizes social reproduction predominantly to homes and to an international market, thus it delegates the cost of social reproduction to mostly migrant women and developing countries where migrant women are from. The purposefully highly regulated presence of racialized migrant women as maids, or live-in caregivers, enabled wealthier Canadians to reproduce not only their lives but also their higher class position which was constructed and reproduced in relation to specific orders of race and ethnicity in Canada. Relatedly, with no or restricted access to worker's rights, migrant workers become (more) precarious and easy to discipline, therefore constituting a class of labourers most favoured by neoliberal capitalism. Last but not least, the distribution and realization of social reproduction -particularly through the gendered division of labour- remains invisible and unchallenged in homes, societies and transnationally (Arat-Koc, 2006).

Barber (2008a) offers an extended analysis by including both sending country and receiving country aspects of migration flows, in which both countries benefit from migration streams for the acquisition of capital, by examining Filipino immigrants' choices. The Philippines is one of the largest labour exporting countries and supplier of both male and female migrants to gendered global labour markets. Pivotal in this phenomenon are capitalism's globalization forms as well as the Philippines governments'

matching labour export policies which include extensive coordinated efforts around bilateral labour export and workers' rights agreements, training and emigrant services, and the creation of relevant discourses. Barber (2008a) contends that, while immigration policies reflect receiving countries' labour market needs, the Philippine labour export policies reflect complex historical emigration patterns which have evolved to meet contemporary global labour market needs. Contemporary flows of emigration can be traced to colonization induced migrations, and women's historical emigration from rural to urban areas of the Philippines as "helpers" (p.1275). Women's current migration across borders is framed by a cultural norm where migration is seen as a key social reproduction strategy and women are valued as contributing to their families' social reproduction. The article thus shows an interplay of material, ideological, and historical factors in women's migrations as labourers occupying differentiated positions based on gender, race, and class.

Building on its internal theoretical debates and incorporating findings from various strands of feminist scholarship, feminist political economy has expanded the concept and application of social reproduction to include all possible sites of social reproduction and multi-scalar levels of analyses. Examining women's disadvantaged positions, feminist political economists revealed the central role of social reproduction for production of surplus, and for current and future production relations. In addition, they have stepped out of a narrow economism and attributed due weight to ideological forces (Vosko, 2002). As such, they have proven that gender inequality could not only be explained in class terms, that is, by one's determined position to the means of production. Moreover, this scholarship accentuated how social reproduction systems were diverse, and contested in different historical and cultural contexts. Social reproduction, as a

concept then, is utilized in feminist political economy to understand all social relations and all forms of work, as unfolding in and through specific economic, political, and cultural realms under capitalism, from a perspective that underscores the importance of the (re)production of life and difference.

A feminist political analysis of the migration of women, particularly in the domestic and care sectors, is rooted in the connection and tension between production and social reproduction relations which manifest within and across nations, and within and between households. Migrant women's paid and unpaid labour in social reproduction benefits global capital accumulation, not only by reproducing cheap and differentiated labour power but also by simultaneously reproducing inequalities in class relations particularly with regards to accessing social reproduction resources and the transfer of surplus value from disadvantaged to privileged groups. Migrant women's labour is concurrently devalorized, exploited and subordinated under the existing gendered division of labour as they continue to be associated with oppressive and essentialist gender ideologies which are articulated across households, labour markets, and national and international economic and social policies. Exploitation and subordination get further convoluted because of other differentiating determinants such as a migrant woman's race, national/ethnic origin, and migrant status. As migrant women join the international labour market in disadvantaged conditions, their identities as workers, women, and family members are reconstructed under existing and changing cultural and political discourses and circumstances in both receiving and sending countries.

Through interviews, life histories and observations, my study opens a window to the local and global oppressive and exploitative structures of the material, ideological, and historical roots, as experienced and challenged by Georgian migrant women in their



daily lives. The conditions under which Georgian women and their families live, procreate, work, interact and sustain themselves are evaluated in relation to how Georgian women imagine and contribute to the continuation of the social relations of capitalism. This evaluation is conducted with a nuanced understanding of agency. I rely on the conceptual framework, “gendered geographies of power”, developed by Pessar and Mahler in 2003. This framework is formulated to analyze people’s gendered social agency, corporal and cognitive, given their own initiative as well as their positioning within multiple hierarchies of power operative within and across many terrains. In addition to the personal dimension consisting of individual characteristics (biography) and cognitive processes (imagination or aim), it includes three fundamental elements: 1. Geographic scales which refer to multiple spatial and social scales such as body, family and state (Pessar & Mahler, 2003, p. 815), 2. Social locations, which refer to a person’s positions within interconnected power hierarchies created through historical, political, economic and other socially stratifying factors including the simultaneous interaction of national but also class, race and ethnicity, and 3. Power geometries; distinct locations regarding access to power over flows and interconnection between places. People exert power over these forces and processes as well as being affected by them (Pessar & Mahler, 2003). This project, thus, follows Georgian women’s labour power, both in commodified and non-commodified forms, as it expands in households locally and transnationally. By doing so, it shows Georgian migrant women’s layered and uncompensated contributions to the maintenance and reproduction of a cheap labour force as well as the mechanisms and contours of their exploitation as labourers. It further offers an overview of choices and decisions as interpreted and acted upon by migrant women in

relation to constricting structures present in their lives. This window, directly connects micro-structural analysis to one that is macro-structural.

### **2.3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

This thesis presents the findings of a multi-sited ethnographic study conducted with Georgian migrant domestic labourers who work in Istanbul and their families who live in Georgia. Spanning across a period of eight months, my ethnographic fieldwork consisted of three separate trips to Turkey and one to Georgia in 2016 and 2017 where I collected data through twenty seven in-depth interviews, seven life history interviews, and multiple forms of participation and observation. On the premise that migrant women and their families live in a transnational space where they are continuously connected via emotional, mental, and material ties, the entire field work is considered to have been conducted simultaneously in both locations.

Social reproductive activities are, by definition, the mundane daily activities consisting of waged and unwaged work. Their purpose is historically and culturally defined, just as they are constricted or enabled under macro-structural political economic conditions. Georgian migrant women spend their days on these activities (waged and unwaged), which find meaning with reference to Georgian and Turkish cultural scripts as well as the historical and current bilateral nation state relations. They try to improve their and their family's circumstances by navigating family, community, and employment relationships which are shaped by daily and local manifestations of global capitalism. My project further examines these daily activities as they unfold in Istanbul and Georgia by

following humans, labour power, objects, relationship scripts, emotions, and aspirations which physically and digitally travel between Georgia and Turkey.

Among qualitative studies, ethnography is the study of “normal” everyday activities and the meaning ascribed to such activities based on their social context (Denzin, 1989). Ethnographic research is set to understand the interaction of individuals with others and with the culture of the society in which they live, while keeping a focus on their interpretation of experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Particularly relevant to this project is the observation that studying daily practices offers insight into global dynamics and hierarchies (Schiller, 2009). Multi-sited research, according to Marcus (1998, p. 90-96), is when a researcher establishes a presence and designs a study with the explicit aim of investigating and problematizing connections between multiple sites, which can be based on the pursuit of moving people, objects, conflicts, and biographies, or more. Therefore, multi-sited ethnographic research is most suited to understand migrant women’s daily activities at local and transnational scales, how these construe as production and social reproduction, and how they connect to historical and contemporary economic, political and social conditions.

Reinharz (1992) asserts that contemporary (feminist) ethnography involves multi-method research consisting of ethnographic observations, participant interviews - impromptu or guided- and document analysis. These three methods were utilized in the way I collected data.. With regards to document analysis I reviewed Turkey’s and Georgia’s unilateral and bilateral migration policies, statistical data in relation to Turkish and Georgian immigration and emigration, and other documents collected during my field work such as money transfer regulations, hiring agency contracts, and church pamphlets.

This study relies more on two direct ethnographic methods: 1) interviews, and 2) participation and observation (fieldwork). I will first discuss the critical role of a key informant in this study. The following section will describe the interviews and interviewees, while the next section will focus on my fieldwork. A map of geographical research sites and a list of participants can be found in *Appendices A and C* respectively.

### 2.3.1. Key Informant

The key informant in this project, Nilay, is a critical component of this study, both in terms of inspiration and access to the field. During my fieldwork, Nilay had been working for nine years for my maternal family who lives in Istanbul. According to Gilchrist and Williams (1999) key informants differ from other informants not only by their nature and depth of information in relation to the research topic but also by their relationship to the researcher (p. 73). Nilay was my first life-story interviewee and a constant source of verification and reiteration of other migrants' migration stories and experiences. She answered my questions countless times on the history of Georgia and Georgian cultural and religious practices. She also acted as a translator, especially when we were in Georgia. She helped me access field sites and acted as a sponsor by way of introducing me to groups of migrants, interviewees, neighbours and friends. These are typical characteristics of key informants (Gilchrist & Williams, 1999, p. 74). Nilay acknowledged that her contributions would make this study happen and that she wanted her (and that of others like her) story to be heard. She was particularly impressed by a book titled "While Waiting for Dodo" (Dato, 2012) which she had read earlier. This book depicted a Georgian migrant woman's (the heroine) discovery of how she inadvertently

financed the migration of another Georgian woman (the lover). In this story, the husband of the heroine gave remittances sent by his wife to a woman that he developed a relationship with in the heroine's absence. In return, the lover saved up the money to migrate for work, only to meet with the heroine by coincidence. For Nilay, this was a touching story because it showed the sacrifices of Georgian women for their families at the risk of losing their families. Nilay wanted the difficulties and opportunities faced by Georgian women in the context of migrations to be known.

### 2.3.2. Interviews

I interviewed a total of thirty-four Georgian women (see *Appendix B* for interview schedules and *Appendix C* for a full list of interviewees). Three of these interviews were conducted in Georgia with returnees from Turkey. Seven of the remaining thirty-one were life histories and they were all collected in Istanbul. These are adequate numbers as after thirty in-depth, narrative interviews, new concepts or themes surface rarely, and scholars are able to identify recurring patterns in their study group (Bernard, 2013). All interviews, as well as some of the group conversations, were audio recorded on my phone. Although most of the informants were quite fluent in Turkish, when there was a need for translation, other migrants and most of the time my key informant, helped me with it. In addition, most women did not care for pseudonyms, so I came up with names for them in the evening when recording my daily field notes.

Participants' age ranged between 26 and 69, with the average age being 50. In fact more than half of the participants were over the age of 50 (20 out of 34) and thus were

more likely to have worked during and/or experienced the Soviet regime. Apart from six participants who were high school graduates, all women held university degrees. Most common university degree was in teaching, followed by nursing, economics and business management, law, and technical degrees (such as controller or mechanical engineer). Apart from three informants (who had undergone vocational training) every participant had professional work experience before migrating to Turkey. Throughout the field work it became clear that at least half of the participants -both among interviewees and other anonymous participants- who came from Kutaisi, Gori, Batumi, and Ozurgeti (see map of Georgia in *Appendix A*) owned farms or gardens which provided supplemental income (albeit with gradually diminishing proportions) before and after Independence. My conversations with Tbilisi residents -both migrant and non-migrant- as well as my observations in Tbilisi, did not reveal such practice, possibly because Tbilisi is the capital city of Georgia (and thus more urbanized). The importance and patterns of multiple varied income generation activities, such as holding professional jobs and tending to gardens, will be fully discussed in *chapter three*. Other important characteristics of the study group relate to their marital status and position in their families. Most women (30 out of 34) had been married at one point. Among those who married two women were divorcees, ten were widows, while 18 were still married. The mechanisms of forming and sustaining multigenerational families, as well as the key kinship concept of “in-law-hood” in participants’ eyes will be explored in *chapter five*. Finally, at the time of interviews, informants’ stay in Turkey had ranged from two to 13 years. The majority were on visitor visa (17) and work permit (12) while five were undocumented workers. All informants worked under live-in arrangements: 18 workers took care of older individuals or couples,

12 worked in households with small children, while the remaining worked as housekeepers for adult families (see *Appendix C* for further details on interviewees).

The goal of semi-structured interviews is to explore a topic more openly and to allow interviewees to express their opinions and ideas in their own words (Esterberg, 2002). First and foremost, I asked participants questions about the reasons behind their migration, why they chose Turkey, and whether they had further migration plans. Their answers summarized the political and economic conditions, the need for family survival and the context of binational policies and history, while outlining patterns of joining global capitalism as labourers. I also inquired about their transnational activities, which included the frequency and nature of contact, how they cared for them, as well as the instruments of communication and transfer. Their answers shed light on social reproduction strategies as they related to gender and family ideologies, and budgets. Questions in relation to their employment included their job finding and quitting patterns, their relationship with employers, their daily schedules and tasks, in addition to their work contracts, wages and wage spending patterns. The answers illuminated the ways in which social reproductive was commodified, structured and exploited. Some of the semi-structured interviews were conducted in the migrants' work place or my family house, while most were in public spaces such as restaurants, tea/coffee shops and parks. Interviews usually lasted between 30 to 45 minutes and every informant was given a piece of paper with my Istanbul phone number on it (which is still active).

I interviewed seven participants about their lives. Life histories are essential in covering the full extent of a person's experiences (Denzin, 1989, p.29). They are

particularly useful in social study, because according to Mills “no social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history and of their intersection within a society has completed its intellectual journey” (Mills, 1959, cited in Denzin, 1989, p.9). Defined as “oral history” by Reinharz (1992), life stories have the potential of facilitating an understanding among social classes, bringing women “into” history, making the female experience part of the written record, as well as developing feminist theory (pp. 134-136). I approached seven women who experienced life under socialism so that I could compare life comprising of waged and unwaged work, work and leisure time, state structures, family configurations and related policies, and geographical (im)mobilities as organized under socialist and post-socialist local political economy. Life histories in this study were not structured. They were collected over several meetings and lasted between three to four hours. Participants usually followed a chronological order, starting from their birth and parental families and ending in Istanbul. Georgia’s political, economic, religious and social relationships with Russia, before, during and after the USSR were discussed in detail. Participants compared their own lives, aspirations and achievements to those of their parents’, and their children’s. Lastly, these interviews informed me of the ways that men and women were conceptualized in relation to each other, to the state and in labour markets, which altogether spoke to the cultural context in which women’s labour was valued or devalued, and rendered visible and invisible.



### 2.2.3. Field Work

The term “fieldwork” denotes activities of observation and informal interviews and conversations in locations where the phenomena of interest occurs (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A researcher’s position as an observer may fall at different ends of the “participant-full observer” continuum throughout a study; that is, she or he may be a complete participant at certain times while be a complete observer at other times, depending on the context or the scope of study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). My fieldwork also consisted of informal, impromptu conversations, as well as observations which oscillated on the “participant-full observer” spectrum.

This study was conducted in two major geographical locations: Turkey and Georgia (See the maps in *Appendix A*). In Istanbul (Turkey) field sites consisted of my family neighbourhood, a restaurant, Orthodox churches of Istanbul and an international bus station (Laleli). In Istanbul, my family’s neighbourhood was a key site. With the help of Nilay, who knew several Georgian migrant domestic labourers in the neighbourhood, I joined migrant labourer groups and gatherings. In addition to conducting interviews, because we lived in the same neighbourhood, I was able to frequently join groups of migrant women for walks, patisserie/coffee shop visits, short gatherings in the neighbourhood park, shopping expeditions and house gatherings. Another site in Istanbul was the “Wristlet”<sup>1</sup> restaurant where Georgian migrant women of another Istanbul neighbourhood typically spent their Sundays. This restaurant became a site where I returned to several Sundays during my field work. Each time I went there I interviewed two or three migrant women, and participated in larger group conversations which I also

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<sup>1</sup> A pseudonym

taped. I went to several Orthodox churches in Istanbul for the purpose of meeting and spending time with migrant women on their day off. Georgians do not have a Church of their own in Istanbul, that is, with permanent clergy of Georgian origin, but they attend other (Greek) Orthodox churches. The conversations and documents at the churches guided me to uncovering the historical migration patterns between Georgia and Turkey, in addition to recruitment of several participants for interviews and participation in group conversations. Laleli bus station is a station where bus companies which operate to and from Georgia are clustered. It is surrounded by shops and service companies which serve migrant women, as well as tourists, and are frequented by employment brokers.

In Istanbul, our conversations revolved around women's migration stories, families, employers, living arrangements, and the best and worst experiences in Turkey. These discussions were further marked by cultural comparisons between Georgia and Turkey in relation to household chores, gender and family relations, social provisions, and economics. In combination with my observations and travel to Georgia, data collected in Istanbul illuminated migrant women's travel/work rhythms and schedules, employment networks and strategies, budgeting and shopping preferences. Overall, participants informed me of the emerging patterns of redistribution and tensions in social reproductive work in Georgia, Turkey, and in between.

In Georgia, I stayed with Nilay's family in Tbilisi with the exception of a few days spent in Kutaisi. In Kutaisi we visited families of three participants whose life histories I had learned in Istanbul. In addition to spending time with interviewees' families, I encountered numerous returnees (from Turkey and Europe), Georgian families and workers, and Turkish nationals. The most remarkable observation of my fieldwork in

Georgia was the prevalence of migration in Georgians' lives. My conversations in Georgia invariably included families' livelihood strategies, their past and current living and working conditions, as well as stories of other migrants and their families. These conversations and my everyday observations showed me which jobs in the labour market men and women worked (or could not) as well as salary scales and social provisions. I observed patterns of expenditure and investment as well as materially and ideologically gendered allocation of roles and resources within families. Tracing words, stories, and monuments gave me a deeper understanding of Georgian culture, and national identity, as manifested and constructed in relation to the past, present, and future. I caught sight of daily lives of Georgian families with migrants, which is mostly built on remittances. It is being constructed over the long shadow of a socialist past, and shaped under the emerging neoliberal capitalism of the region.

#### 2.2.4. Data Analysis

Interviews were audiotaped, transcribed, and translated to English by me. Once transcriptions were complete I first transferred key themes and moments coded from interviews on large poster size papers by hand, by individual interview. I further incorporated other themes from my field notes to this poster. This process, called "open coding" (Charmaz, 2006) is not about narrowing down what a researcher is looking for but rather is about labelling and organizing. After seeing the emerging patterns and recurring themes, I turned to my electronic files and developed new files around these emerging categories of themes. Following a more "focused coding" (van den Hoonaard, 2018, p. 176) more subthemes materialized. I coded general interviews and life histories separately, and benefited from the latter to provide both more context and deeper insight

into the data collected from filed notes and interviews. As last step, I compared and integrated interview data, and observations with information obtained from document analysis. This step brought a historical and structural context, evidence and organization to the study material collected through interviews and field work. The use of different methods in qualitative inquiry is called “triangulation”. Triangulation is a process where a researcher brings different kinds of evidence to bear on a problem (Esterberg, 2002). It balances the strengths of weaknesses of each method and thus makes qualitative inquiry and analysis more sound (ibid).

In this ethnographic research I examined Georgian migrant women’s daily lives in relation to households, labour markets, states and transnational structures and spaces. This inquiry into how they made a living, and organized their social reproductive labour and relations under the regional manifestations of global capitalism was conducted through three different methods of data collection. Along with the sponsorship of Nilay, the triangulated data provide the rich data basis of this dissertation.

## CHAPTER 3: DISRUPTED LIVELIHOODS



The ruins of a sanatorium in Kutaisi: one of many health sector institutions which employed Georgian workers during Soviet time

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

*We are waiting for the day to come that Georgia is in good shape. [The day] we have enough money and we are at home. (Nimet, 6 June 2016, Istanbul)*

Nimet, like the majority of participants in this study, migrated from Georgia to Turkey in pursuit of wages to secure her family's sustenance and well-being. They were all able to do so by becoming part of, and beneficial to globalizing capitalism. What drove Georgian migrant women to contribute to global capital accumulation as migrant

labourers was the creation and maintenance of a certain set of political and economic conditions which led to the emergence and evolution of new social reproduction relations. In their case, this set materialized out of the cessation of Soviet Georgia and its replacement with a new, independent, and neoliberal capitalist Georgia.

As outlined in the previous chapter, one of the basic premises of feminist political economy is that social reproduction relations reflect modifications in globally expanding capitalist production relations. Mobile capital gives way to a rapid veering of profitable sectors, depressed labour markets and precarious employment in search of the twin aim of securing cheap(er) resources and labour force. States, increasingly in cooperation with international governing systems, are pivotal in the process of a country's integration to global capitalism by way of attempting to make it more attractive for foreign capital, as well as in making social reproduction conditions correspond to the needs of capital production (Bakker, 2007). As a result, social reproduction relations at national, community and family levels which exist in these territories become subjugated to capitalist social relations in distinctive patterns due to geographical and historical differences. These economic, political and social alterations condition families to seek alternative -to previously practiced- ways for subsistence, while incorporating them into the processes of global capital accumulation.

Social reproduction, as defined in *chapter two*, can be summarized as people's everyday activities of collecting, utilizing, and investing in resources for their daily and generational survival. It involves processes of maintaining and reproducing people, which range from the rather immediate needs of procuring shelter, safety, food and clothing to future considerations such as increasing employability of the offspring and care for elders. These processes are indexed to cultural norms, as well as to visions of one's future

social and economic positions. The concept of social reproduction further suggests engagement with various state and non-state institutions for the aim of securing the survival and well-being of individuals and families. Therefore, social reproduction consists of evaluation, planning and action with regards to possibilities or combinations available and accessible within one's constraining material and ideological milieu. It is through the disruption of availability of or accessibility to resources which have been relied on for their social reproduction that populations will turn to alternative strategies. At this moment of globalized capitalism, these alternatives are exceedingly more tied to capital accumulation.

This chapter sheds light on the macro-structural political and economic imperatives behind Georgian women's migration to Turkey as a strategy of wage generation for their families' sustenance. The focus is on the nuanced ways in which global capital, in search of accumulation, has unfolded in Georgia and initiated a novel tension between production and social reproduction relations in the country while shaping Georgian families' options and choices. This tension is described in relation to pre- and post-Independence income generation activities in the face of decreased cash inputs and increased expenditures on family budgets. The first section offers a Marxist overview of capitalism's prior and current contrivances of accessing resources for capital accumulation. More specifically, I discuss the concept of "expropriation" or "primitive accumulation" and its more contemporary interpretation under the term "accumulation by dispossession" to explain the creation of conditions in which social relations are subsumed to service the needs of capital. The following section summarizes the literature on repercussions of ex-socialist countries' incorporation to the global, neoliberal capitalist economy on populations and their social reproduction strategies. Here, further attention is

paid to capitalism's calibrating attempts which draw from and alter the existing national and local economies, and social reproduction strategies. The next section chronicles the Georgian political and economic measures that took place since its independence from the Soviet Union. In this context, pressures to access Georgian resources and labour force from global capital's institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and global banks, and Russia, which recently turned capitalist, are determined to be critical. This section describes a series of preconditions, sanctions, and aggressions enforced on the Georgian state by these forces and their economic, political, and social consequences. The rest of the chapter incorporates Georgian migrant women's own experiences as they recounted the effects of these political and economic processes, by fits and starts, on their lives and income generation strategies to fulfill their social reproduction needs. It outlines the specific ways in which their survival strategies like men's circular migrations were curtailed and how their resources, such as land, produce, savings, and labour power were rendered worthless. It shows that Georgians were subsequently incorporated into global capital accumulation as labourers and as debt payors. The latter, although stressed in feminist political economy and the literature on dispossessions, is not a topic that is thoroughly examined in the literature on women's migration or reorganization of social reproduction relations. In this study, patterns of borrowing and debt repayment, particularly from private national and international banks, are found to be profoundly instrumental in the commodification of Georgian families' resources and women's social reproductive labour. The chapter ends with migrant women's reflections on their future in light of their current investments to secure their families' survival and societal position while waiting for a new balance between production and social reproduction relations to be struck in Georgia.



### 3.2. PRIMITIVE CAPITALIST ACCUMULATION

Marx (Marx, 1867/1990) traces the commencement of capitalist production relations to a set of violent and bounding actions aimed at seizing and subsuming other, alternative, pre-capitalist means of production. In his work, Marx identifies a list of expropriations which assured the release of resources for capital accumulation. For example, in the first volume of *Capital* (Marx, 1867/1990), chapter twenty-seven, in the context of the enclosure of the commons in England and Scotland he chronicled the ways in which the English royal and bourgeois class “conquered the fields for capitalist agriculture, made the soil part and parcel of capital, and created for the town industries the necessary supply of a ‘free and outlawed’ proletariat” (Marx, 1867/1990, pp. 877-895). As these lands were usurped by capital with the help of law and lawlessness, previous occupants of these lands which mostly consisted of independent peasants, fishers, and craftsmen, had to take up employment in the burgeoning capitalist industrial production of the time because they faced starvation and/or various types of punishment. They became “free workers” (p. 874). In their totality Marx calls these expropriations “primitive accumulation” (ibid, p. 873) and contends that they constitute the pre-conditions of capitalist accumulation. Ultimately, primitive accumulation results in “divorcing the producer from the means of production” (p. 875) and thus leads to commodification of both land and labour as they both become amenable to capital accumulation. As noted, a key feature of these processes is the use of violent means which are usually backed by state legislations or actions. In England during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries those who were rendered landless or without subsistence were disciplined by a “bloody legislation” (p.896) which restricted their appearance, movements and

working conditions. In tandem, wars and conquests, (transatlantic) slavery, and colonialism have been trademarks of such expropriations of pre-capitalist production and social relations in capitalism's globalized history.

Marxist scholars have expanded the application of the concept primitive accumulation. Of note is Luxemburg (1913), who observed that primitive and capital accumulation may and do co-exist. In other words, the former need not end for the latter to start. She contends that due to capitalism's periodic overaccumulation crises, capital reaches out to other spaces where it can access surplus value by way of establishing wage relations and the marketing of commodities. Capitalist production relations at the international level are established through "force, fraud, oppression and looting" (p.358) which constitute the cornerstone of colonial policies, wars, and the international loan system.

In contemporary scholarship, Harvey (2005) builds on the simultaneous display of the features of primitive accumulation and capital accumulation. He argues that capitalism needs its "spatio-temporal fixes" (p. 43) to deal with its continuous accumulation crises, and provides the establishment of neoliberal capitalist relations from late 1970s to early 21<sup>st</sup> century as illustration. Primitive accumulation, which Harvey labels "accumulation by dispossession" (p.137) takes different forms in different geographies based on their available resources, market and production capacities, and level of integration into the global capitalist system. To attune the latest neoliberal visions of geographical and temporal capital accumulation, certain forms of dispossessions become more pronounced such as the credit system and finance capital, while new forms

of primitive accumulation also emerge. For example, since the 1980s, populations in the North (more advanced capitalist countries) lost their livelihoods, houses and pension rights due to debt peonage and corporate frauds. Enclosures of the commons took place in the South through land grabs for development, waves of privatization of water and other public utilities as well as education and health institutions. Biopiracy, the commodification of cultural forms, and patenting and licencing are further ways in which assets and labour around the world are being commodified (Harvey, 2005). As an additional point, in an effort to explain and address the issue of class struggle in this dynamic and changing capitalist forms of dispossessions and capital accumulation, Carbonella and Kasmir (2014) assert that the massive defeat and disorganization of working classes themselves be counted as major dispossessions. They argue that the spatial and temporal expansions and manipulations cause continuous cultural, political and structural making and remaking of the labour force and working classes. Such consideration requires a more holistic definition of “accumulation by dispossessions”, which refers to any set of economic, social, and cultural appropriation or disorganization with the aim of introducing new set of capitalist relations.

Harvey’s theory of “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey, 2005) applies key characteristics of “primitive accumulation” to contemporary capitalist expansion, both temporally and geographically. The original tenets of “primitive accumulation” consist of the use of extra-economic, fraudulent, and violent pressures for accessing resources and populations that lie outside of capitalism to be replaced by capitalist social relations. In this context, contemporary conceptualization of “accumulation by dispossession” covers the ways in which primitive accumulation has become more salient, nuanced, and

diversified under current neoliberal accumulation regime (Glassman, 2006). In other words, it widens the range of possible resources and forms of extra economic pressures to be included in such analysis. Expanded temporal and spatial considerations in understanding and theorizing the proletarianization process of populations may thus include not only appropriation of resources currently outside of capitalist relations (such as land grabs or natural resources) but also appropriation of livelihood resources which have been formerly secured by working classes (who were previously proletarianized) and other forms survival and/or existential elements (e.g. biopiracy). As such, schemes such as the privatization of state enterprises, public utilities, social housing (Glassman, 2006), healthcare, and education, cuts to social spending, as well as the erosion of other benefits which were secured through previous struggles (e.g. pension plans) may be counted as targets of continuing primitive accumulation in global south and global north alike (Bezanson & Luxton, 2006). Relatedly, “accumulation by dispossession” is a broader term which provides theoretical space for feminist political economists to fully analyze the conditions behind commodification of social relations, and more particularly, of social reproductive labour. As mentioned earlier, the latter is an issue which has not been addressed by Marx.

While contemporary “history of dispossessions can be told as the simultaneous production of both wage labour and wagelessness” (Carbonella & Kasmir, 2014, p.10), it is not the same production and social reproduction systems that the capital meets in different parts of the world when in search of temporal and spatial fixes. This point speaks to the creation of difference in relation to both how capitalism will unfold in a geography and how populations will be incorporated into the global labour force, the

latter also continually restructured as a result of the changing needs of capitalist production relations. Wolf (1982), for example, in *Europe and the people without history* demonstrates that although capitalism has gone global, it generated “variability and differentiation not only through its combination with other modes [of production] but also in the very course of its own operations” (Wolf, 1982, p.303). He shows the extent and varying nature of the spatial expansion of capitalism, of primitive accumulations and the consequent release and hierarchization of a global labour force. More often than not, the latter included “massive relocations” (p. 361) of peoples to key sites of accumulation. These relocations were stratified due to differentiated dispossessions, newly established capitalist social relations and capitalist accumulation’s needs.

Dispossessions are a process of engendering difference, not only because populations are affected differently but also because they can be hierarchized and exploited based on their (constructed) attributes. This hierarchization of attributes secures amplified surplus value extraction from both waged and unwaged labour. In this regard, feminist scholars have analyzed the extent of the repercussions of “accumulation by dispossession” on women in the context of their unpaid social reproductive work which secures the social reproduction of the labour force and capitalist social relations. Silvia Federici (2004) contends that dispossessions created an accumulation “of differences and divisions within the working class” which then in turn, became “constituent of class rule and the formation of the modern proletariat” (Federici, 2004, p. 63), based on gender, age, and race. Furthermore, from a gender perspective, she traces the violent history of the establishment of a (gendered) division of labour in Europe to the time of “enclosures of commons” as studied by Marx (see above). She shows that primitive accumulation was

historically contingent on the violent disciplining of women through witch hunts and the expropriation of their reproductive labour. Women's work thus became invisible and devalorized labour in the reproduction of labour power and capitalist accumulation. In relation with the last point, Maria Mies (1986) expands that women's unpaid social reproductive labour, whether in the context of household chores, subsistence production, or the informal sector, is subject to an ongoing form of primitive accumulation because of its role in enabling the sale of household members' labour power to be exploited. Without this labour, "the capitalist [would not] be able to accumulate capital" (ibid, p.269). In this context, demands on women's labour which is key in reproducing and maintaining the labour force constitutes the analytical focus. The transformations with relation to the appropriation, devalorization and modifications of women's social reproductive labour in the specific case of Georgia will be discussed in detail in *chapters five and six*.

For scholars of feminist political economy, primitive accumulations also mark the separation of production from social reproduction, and the subordination of the processes of social reproduction to commodification (Bakker, 2007). Social reproduction processes, from the perspective of social reproduction theory, are not only about replenishment and safety of labourer bodies, but also about the reproduction of social relations securing a future labour force willing to work under and reproduce capitalist production. Societal reproduction thus is a larger undertaking with multiple partakers including families, state institutions, government and non-government organizations as well as social networks in particular cultural environments. Consequently, instances of commodification and their implications should be analyzed in relation to these interrelated structures. Considering women's central role in social reproduction with regards to household chores and "caring

roles” in families and communities as well as with regards to their role in linking different sites of social reproduction as listed above, an analytical focus on women’s labour proves particularly useful in determining and describing the effects of global capitalism’s local (primitive) capital accumulation and social reproduction needs.

Scholars of social reproduction concur that the latest mode of capital accumulation under global neoliberalism has risen over an assortment of “accumulation by dispossessions” which has exerted extra demand on both women’s paid and unpaid labour. The most prominent effect of the separation of production and social reproduction is that social reproduction becomes externalized to the household and family, to be realized through workers’ wages (Bakker, 2007). Expanding on this issue, Hartsock labels contemporary capitalist globalization “the feminization of primitive accumulation”, denoting the process wherein women are incorporated into the global labour force in a devalorized manner when jobs themselves are feminized; in that they are now more flexible, precarious, and worth less than “real wages” for both men and women (Hartsock, 2006, p. 186). This suggests an increased demand on women’s paid labour at a time where social reproduction increasingly depends on wages but the probability of making decent wages is diminished. With regards to this issue Piper (2011) suggests that the informalization, casualization, and precariousness of work negatively affect men’s ability to find permanent employment or jobs in traditionally male dominated sectors. By extension, men’s wages coming into the household are less secured and less remunerated. Uprooted from secure wage generation strategies, households thus rely more on wages, and require more wages, therefore becoming subject to increased commodification and/or indebtedness (LeBaron, 2010).

Decreased public provisions is another indication that social reproduction is becoming more privatized and marketized and suggests increased demand on women's unpaid social reproductive labour (Bakker, 2007; Kofman, 2014; Bezanson, 2006). For example, in Canada, Bezanson (2006) shows that following the neoliberal economic strategies the cutbacks in social welfare provisions which were granted during Keynesian-Fordist economy dispossessed women from their livelihood and social reproduction strategies. Having less access to socialized care services and payments, poorer and more disadvantaged women had to pick up in-family care, which further reduced their already low access to well paid, secure jobs with benefits. For many, this meant living in compromising conditions of well-being including getting by without food or medication, or sharing space and other goods with others, coupled with increased indebtedness (Bezanson, 2006). Again, in Canada, Le Baron (2010) calls the simultaneous restructuring of the welfare system and labour markets as "enclosures" (p. 891) and documents the ways in which social reproduction was delegated "from a matter of public and collective concern to one of private and individual responsibility" (p. 891), under the neoliberal market imperatives. She lists several federal and provincial level interventions, such as the termination of the Canadian Assistance Plan which brought drastic cuts to childcare support both to individuals and to childcare centres, and changes to Unemployment Insurance (now called Employment Insurance) which saw implementation of new criteria, as means of dispossessing women through the "redefinitions of the commons" (p. 900). As a result, both middle and working-class women have been dispossessed of assets and programs which assisted them in meeting the social reproductive needs of their families and were compelled to join the labour market under unequal circumstances. Canadian women were further forced to spare more



hours for waged work, usually in multiple jobs, while also taking on various forms of debt such as mortgages, home equity loans and credit cards (p. 905). These conditions suggest the subjugation of social reproduction in Canada to (global) capital market relations at many levels: Women and families became more market dependent while their paid and unpaid labour are structured by capitalist work schedules and regime requirements. Daily lives, relationships and spaces are defined increasingly more within the terms of capitalist system production and, in relation to future generations, further conditions of dependence on market relations are created.

In another part of the world, Paprocki (2016) lists the multi layered expropriations of the means of social of reproduction via microcredit schemes. Focusing on a group of women in rural Bangladesh, she follows a series of neoliberal reforms under structural adjustment policies and donor-driven non-governmental organization tutelage. These policies oversaw the privatization of a variety of previously socialized services such as health care and food security programs. As a result, women from peasant families had to borrow credit from numerous local and global micro-finance institutions which still continue to flourish in Bangladesh. The borrowed credit was used to finance temporary migrations of family members or for consumption during periodic food insecurities. Paprocki (2016) argues that these microcredit interventions were instrumental in the implementation of more general processes of global capitalist development and social reproduction relations. Specifically, Bangladeshi women had to extend their unpaid labour to deal with bureaucratic requirements and periodic meetings diminishing their care for household needs. Furthermore, Bangladeshi women were under constant threat of losing their assets, such as chickens, and pots and pans, clothes, jewelry and structural

components of their homes which they had showed as collaterals. In some cases, these threats were realized. Additionally, they were also under constant harassment of interest collectors, which altogether made them police the activities of their family members, and pressure them to work in precarious jobs or migrate to meet the repayment schedules.

This literature suggests that the commodification and calibration of social reproduction relations under global capitalism are geographically and historically diversified as well as gendered. Bakker and Gill (2019) call these specific differentiations and varieties in contemporary globalized capitalism stemming from concrete social, cultural, ecological, and material practices and structures “variegated social reproduction” (p. 504). This term reflects that over different periods of time and across different societies and scales, social relations have been commodified by the intensification of the power and reach of capital, albeit unevenly (Bakker & Gill, 2019). It is also important to note that these historical and contemporary processes of primitive accumulation do not reign without resistance (Carbonella & Kasmir, 2014). Considering all of these processes, I now turn to the specific history of dispossessions, in Georgia, following its Independence from the Soviet Union, through a gendered perspective.

This chapter examines the dispossessions that precede Georgian women’s migration to Turkey. It starts by discussing the mixed nature of socialist economies (with elements of market economy), their history of contested establishment and reproduction, and their implications on social reproduction of citizens in socialist countries. It proceeds by showing the ways in which Georgian families’ income generation strategies through salaried jobs, agriculture, migration, and state benefit payments suffered under the new political economy of Georgia and the region after the fall of socialist system. Georgian women adopted two main strategies in order to compensate for continuing cash

deficiencies: borrowing, and outmigration. Through migrant women's migration stories, I demonstrate how socialist production strategies were shaped by the introduction of capitalist relations which resulted in the commodification of Georgian families' resources and labour power. As a result, participants in this study were compelled to join the global feminized labour force working in feminized sectors such as the domestic, and care sector in extremely devalorized conditions because of their gender, ethnicity, migrant status, and occupation sector. Their remittances are being used to finance their families' social reproduction, Georgian state's budget, as well as global capital by way of repayment of overpriced debts.

### **3.3 POST-SOCIALIST POLITICAL ECONOMY**

*“There was money then and not much to buy whereas nowadays there is everything to buy but no money” –a grandma in Georgia (27 August 2016, Kutaisi)*

I use the term “post-socialism” to refer to the period of time that started after the end of the Soviet socialist system which used to feature an economy dominated and organized by the state following the central Soviet party's economic and political directions. Burawoy and Verdery (1999) posit that socialism was a system in which the state promoted industrial production at the expense of finance and trade. The state exercised strict control over the organization of production and redistribution, and thus had a characteristic universal welfare organization which rested on specific understandings of labour agreements and gender regimes. Finally, interwoven in this system was the rejection of capitalist definitions of property (Burawoy & Verdery, 1999, p. 3). The Union of Soviet Socialist States (USSR) consisted of fifteen socialist republics

across North and Central Asia. It was also closely associated with the “Eastern Bloc” which consisted of several communist nations in Eastern and Central Europe including Bulgaria, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia. The “Eastern Bloc” and the USSR came to an end in 1991. The rest of this section first provides a historical evidence to the contested establishment and maintenance of socialist relations and state controlled economy in ex-socialist countries. The following section will draw from literature to addresses the conditions of post-socialism in ex-socialist states as well as ex-Eastern bloc countries.

### 3.3.1. Controversies of Socialist State Economy

Several interrelated visions guided the establishment of Bolshevik power in the name of proletariat over Soviet territories, and its legitimization efforts, after the October Revolution in 1917. The basic tenets were the eradication of bourgeois nationalist governments, feudal and patriarchal orders, and endowing nations (a relative) autonomy and representation as they were annexed (Marshall, 2010). Eastern Bloc countries were presented socialism as a system where people would labour in dignity and freedom, where women received equal pay for equal work, and where national minorities rights would be protected, in short, as a system which would eliminate “inequality, hunger, poverty, and exploitation” (Verdery, 1999, p. 4). The socialist state was to achieve this, through centrally controlled production and redistribution which required making all resources public, and subjugated to central authority.

Making resources available to central control was built on *Proletarianization theory* which anticipated “a homogenous working class, consisting both of industrial and

agricultural workers, and earning a living exclusively from wages and salaries” (Manchin & Szelenyi, 1985, p. 249). Furthermore, under the combined effects of urbanization and industrialization, this diverse yet unified modern communist class would overcome nationalism and embrace “social internationalism” (Marshall, 2010, p. 290). Accordingly, early Soviet interventions saw massive dislocation of peasants who were recruited to work in collectivized farms or in factories during the large scale industrialization program (Siegelbaum & Suny, 1994). These interventions were met by colossal resistance, especially in the three Caucasian republics of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia (Marshall, 2010). Series of recurrent peasant rebellions in these regions were violently crushed by the Soviet forces by way of killings, imprisonments, forced migrations, and forced labour regimes between early 1920s and 1940s (Marshall, 2010). Socialist states used other measures to obtain consent of the proletariat, ranging from introducing modern infrastructure and services in education, health, energy, and transportation sectors which increased living standards, in addition to implementing various five year economic programs which alternated the macro economic conditions between mixed economy and state dominated economy (Marshall, 2010).

Scholars of Soviet socialist regime generally concur that such proletarianization was not achieved, except perhaps for some spatial and temporal pockets in Soviet history (see a comparison between Polish, Hungarian and Russian factory workers in 1980s by Burawoy, 2001; and a discussion on western scholars’ negative, and Soviet scholars’ positive portrayal of Soviet working class experiences by Siegelbaum and Suny, 1994). Among the major reasons for this was the presence of a tyrannical, and extremely bureaucratized central authority. For instance, in a historical account of the formation of Soviet working class, Siegelbaum and Suny (1994) argue that the proletariat lost its

political power even as early as 1920s when all factory committees were subjugated to the Communist Party, and the proletariat class was forced to socially reproduce only through the state, thus preventing any collective political organization or the formation of “class for itself” understanding (p. 25). In the following years and decades, the top administrative cliques of Communist Party accumulated further power which rested on their ultimate control over production and redistribution.

The purpose of Communist Party’s bureaucratic and hierarchical organization was to secure and preserve the socialization of the means of production through establishing direct or indirect state ownership of the means of production, and more importantly, through central planning (Feldbrugge, 1984). Centralized planning included the allocation of resources necessary for production, management of the production process by target quotas, and the distribution of consumer products and services (Feldbrugge, 1984). The upper sections of the bureaucratic organization accumulated power and wealth through unequal distribution practices, and privileged access to subsidized resources (Sampson, 1987), and they were not judicially accountable for (financial) mismanagement (Marshall, 2010). The promotion of self-serving agendas was further compounded by endless and capricious mismanagement of resource distribution, which in turn created an economy of shortages experienced as scarcities of raw material, labour power, equipment, and consumer products and services (Stark, 1989; Verdery, 1999). As a result, the higher echelons of Communist Party -and by extension, the Communist Party- were seen and resisted against as the antagonist class by workers (Verdery, 1999), while the regime lost its ideological and material legitimacy in the face of observed inefficiency, waste, class privilege, favouritism and lack of living standards (Buroway, 2001, p. 31).

Dissent among proletarianized groups manifested itself in covert and overt resistance strategies and spread from the shop floors and collective farms to form a web of economic activities, which represented a siphoning of public productive and distributive resources for private gain (Sampson, 1987). Indeed, a *second economy*<sup>2</sup> was prevalent across all socialist countries. Livelihoods drew from both first economy and second economy where the latter both relied on the first while simultaneously supporting and undermining it (Stark, 1989). Three reasons lied under second economy activities: 1. An effort to reach material objectives which were not provided by the system, 2. Collusion of socialist firm managers, who needed to fulfill production quotas despite shortages, with workers, and 3. Disrespect for the regime, which workers saw to exploit them (Burawoy, 2002, pp. 75-76). In factories, workers were observed to perform low intensity and negligent work, in addition to frequent absenteeism, turnover, and lateness rates (Sampson, 1987) or to collectively organize against the regime demanding changes in macro-economic, political structures, and general work conditions (Burawoy, 2001). Extra income earned by labourers through second economy activities allowed workers to circumvent managerial control (Burawoy, 2001) and/or to bargain selectively (Stark, 1989). The major second economic activity, which was also officially endorsed by the state, was private agricultural production. By the end of socialist era, private agriculture, which was done both in private lands and kolkhozes, was holding a substantial share in overall socialist agricultural production (Feldbrugge, 1984). Moreover, informal employment strategies were widespread and included activities such as subcontracting for

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<sup>2</sup> a broad range of income-generating activity outside the boundaries of the redistributively coordinated and managed economy (of state socialism) (Stark, 1989, p. 651).

socialist firms, moonlighting, informal construction, repair, and transportation services (Stark, 1989; Feldbrugge, 1984), renting, consumer product manufacturing, providing tutoring and other services, speculative and/or untaxed trading, money lending, operating a private firm, pilfering from the work place for personal use or for trading, and bribing (Sampson, 1987). Overall, these informal sectors supplemented the centrally managed socialist economy. However, at the same time, they rendered the system more ineffective by reducing its access to productive and redistributive resources, implementing market relations, and enlarging property rights (Stark, 1989). Furthermore, they strengthened the bureaucratic power and its hierarchies by way of bribes and nepotism, as well as creating a new set of market based hierarchies among working populations (Manchin & Szelenyi, 1985).

Georgia in particular, was noted to have fiercely resisted the centralization of government and economic integration to the USSR . Marshall (2010) reports that Georgian countryside saw widespread uprisings until early 1940s, and the Georgian peasantry remained deeply unenthusiastic supporters of the new order, which they showed by not voting for Georgian Communist Party representatives election after election. By 1960s, communism was dead in the eyes of the majority and an unofficial black economy in high value consumer goods as well as some criminal structures had formed (Marshall, 2010). In 1980s, Georgia had a booming strong second economy where incomes from it often greatly exceeded official wages (Sampson, 1987). The country was characterized with high accounts of bribery, favouritism at all state distribution and service mechanisms (education, house/car allocation, personnel) and common defraud of the state enterprise by way of personal use or sale (Feldbrugge, 1984).



The following sections will mostly focus on the losses which occurred in the livelihood strategies which were directly practiced within the first economy. None of the participants in this study mentioned any second economy related activities that they conducted in Socialist Georgia. However, in light of above discussion, it is evident that there was strong second economy which provided various forms of (usually) unofficial and supplementary strategies of livelihood, supported by (and in turn supporting) the centralized socialist economy. It is reasonable to assume that the introduction of capitalism as the first economy not only eliminated guaranteed employment, and social benefits provided by the state -however mediocre-, but also most of the second-economy based livelihood practices as well, due to the disappearance of state provided resources on which they depended.

### 3.3.2. Introduction of Capitalist Economy

After 1991, post-socialist countries have introduced neoliberal economic policies at a fast pace for the purpose of joining the global free market which meant a re-organization of production and social welfare relations. Usually called “shock therapy doctrine” (Humphrey & Mandel, 2002, p. 2) this economic package indicated an acceptance of western liberalism, and in the case of ex-socialist states, a definite move away from socialist state controlled, as well as state-supported or more regulated forms of capitalism. This doctrine’s applications were a series of IMF and World Bank loans given to post-socialist countries to support their joining the global marketplace through rapid privatization, the freeing of prices, withdrawal of subsidies and free trade (ibid, p.1). Disrupting after-effects of such neoliberal reforms have been the subject of scholarly

interest. This literature points to similarities and differences among the socialist and post-socialist countries. I will first outline some of the similarities followed by differences documented across ex-Socialist countries and populations.

There are some crucial similarities across post-socialist states which can be ascertained from the accounts of post-Socialist populations' experiences. The ethnographies of post-socialist societies point to the destruction of previous livelihood strategies, along with increased poverty, amplified inequalities and the uneven withdrawal of state social welfare provisions. A common recurring theme in these studies is anger, frustration and a certain degree of nostalgia with regards to the loss of state provided security and welfare provisions. These feelings can mainly be attributed to the loss of secure livelihoods, or safe and (relatively) equal re-distribution in the present and future (Yalcin Heckmann, 2012) or at least loss of a time where needs were more adequately fulfilled even though there were less secure rights in a legal sense (Kandiyoti & Mandel, 1998). For example, in Russia, Burawoy, Krotov and Lytkina (2004) mention that the socialist system was constituted by model factories, with relatively high wages and benefits which ranged from housing, summer dwellings and camps, and kindergartens. By the same token, Kideckel (2002) portrays how Soviet ideology in East-Central European countries stressed the role of the working class which translated into high wages and supplementary state services. In these countries, Read and Thelen (2007), support this portrait by explaining that universal social security provisions were comprehensive in that they included access to waged work, pensions, social assistance and subsidized cheap consumer goods. Included further in the socially subsidized services were generous, gender specific benefits geared for socialized reproduction such as subsidized daycares,

lengthy maternity leaves, and other family benefits (Pine, 2002; Read and Thelen, 2007; Ishkanian, 2013).

On the other hand, socialist republics and Eastern Bloc countries differed from one another in significant respects such as the intensity, span and effectiveness of Soviet control, in the extent of popular support or resistance, and in the degree and timing of efforts at economic and political reform towards a market economy and democratic rule (Verdery, 1996, p.19). Furthermore, post-socialist orders showed differences among countries in matters based on differences on the establishment of democracy, reinstatement of private property in land, and the description of the relationship between the state and individual (Kandiyoti & Mandel, 1998). To illustrate, Burawoy (2000) suggests that Hungary's political and economic reforms which had started some ten years before the end of socialism better prepared that country for joining the global market economy than Russia, notwithstanding that both countries experienced gaping inequalities, and the creation of a new ruling class which was rooted in the previous regime and which promoted and benefited from such changes (also see Verdery, 1996 for Romania). Humphrey and Mandel (2002) highlight that the introduction of a western liberal doctrine of "the market" brought in similar economic measures for almost every post-socialist country, such as rapid privatization of public assets and land, the freeing of prices, establishment of free trade, and withdrawal of subsidies, yet they did not create similar results because of the individual country populations' prior perceptions and specific experiences of "the market" in the pre-existing social relations (p. 2). Integration into the global market also brought in foreign capital and investment along with privatization of banks, and new financial and credit systems and institutions, but their

nature, “success” or reception depended on the specific country as well as the resource status of individuals and families (Stenning, Smith, Rochovska & Swiatek, 2010). Moreover, the post-socialist states differed in that while the countries of central Asia assumed rather authoritarian political forms, the countries of central and eastern Europe moved to a more democratic orientation (Humphrey & Mandel, 2002). Nevertheless, the ethnographies which I will summarize below, do draw our attention to certain patterns of the effects of socialism’s collapse on labourers, families and their survival strategies; in general, what we may call the effects of changing production relations on social reproduction relations. These summaries are done through the lens of social reproduction theory; that is, by paying attention to variances in manifestations of capitalist encroachment on local social reproduction relations in nuanced ways because of the existing differences found in particular localities.

In general, after the implementation of neoliberal economic policies, the disintegration of state administered industrial and agriculture production meant loss of employment for all populations across ex-socialist and ex-eastern bloc countries. For instance, Pine (2002) reports that in Poland, populations experienced unemployment or the threat of unemployment for the first time. Worker jobs as well as wages declined while the relative cost of living increased (Kideckel, 2002; and Verdery, 1996 in Romania; Burawoy, Krotov and Lytkina, 2004 in Russia). Working class individuals could not access jobs available in the new private sector due to lack of opportunities for training and education (Kideckel, 2002). Gender was also a factor in how job loss was experienced. In Russia, Burawoy, Krotov and Lytkina (2004) suggest that career possibilities shrunk more for men than women, because women mostly held service

sector jobs and these sectors continued to operate. On the contrary, Morokvasic (2004) argues that women were made redundant after the collapse of the socialist economy and were largely deskilled. Kideckel's (2002) and Keough's (2004) findings support the latter position in that women's labour was more devalorized because they were the last to be hired and first to be fired. Related to women's central role in social reproduction, the fact that the states did away with their responsibility in assuming the costs of biological and social reproduction (Verdery, 1996) led to deeper losses for women. Women experienced a relative dislocation from their structural position as mothers once their universal entitlements to social welfare were replaced by new neoliberal and individualistic criterion based policies (Pine, 2002; Read & Thelen, 2007).

Effected by decreased access to cash and social welfare provisions, families turned to alternative strategies of subsistence agriculture, entrepreneurship, migration, and borrowing, often combining several of them in addition to securing waged jobs and welfare payments. Burawoy, Krotov and Lytkina (2004) show that in Russia, some families retreated to the domestic economy, consisting of mainly subsistence agriculture, while others turned to the service or trade sectors, or petty commodity production often relying on their networks and material possessions left from the Soviet era. Both groups still searched for waged income and further supplemented these strategies with the help of still available but diminished state pensions, child support, public assistance, unemployment benefits or rent subsidies. Similar survival strategies were found in the central European post-socialist states, particularly in terms of subsistence agricultural activities and household production, with the supplement of individualistic entrepreneurial activities.

These new strategies were gendered as well. Across Russia (Burawoy, Krotov & Latyinka, 2004) and east European countries (Pine, 2002) women dominated the household based subsistence production and coordinated kin based family farming, while men either settled for casual work, or set up private business tapping into their male-dominated networks, or migrated to other countries which had labour shortages in male-dominated sectors such as construction. Kideckel (2002) reports similar observations in Romania where women became even more associated with domestic work and household production while men started to migrate to Italy, Germany or Moldavia, with or without documents.

Other studies show a more complicated situation with diverse combinations of survival strategies responsive to national and regional economic and political macrostructures. For example, it was mostly women who took on migration and migration related trade strategy in some countries. Women in central Asian post-socialist states who usually dominated the market places and bazaars before, started to control the entrepreneurship, and particularly trade, with new countries in the form of shuttle or suitcase trade<sup>3</sup> (Ishkanian, 2013). Morokvasic (2004) supports this finding in east-central European ex-socialist countries. Women, she demonstrates, were specifically found to either commute to Europe for jobs in the domestic sector, or for suitcase trade.

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<sup>3</sup> Shuttle trade describes the small-scale business of moving consumer goods from global textile manufacturing centers into the former USSR countries (Bloch, 2017, p. 59-60)

Relatively fewer studies examine borrowing in the context of post-socialist families' survival strategies. Data from urban centres in Poland and Slovakia in Stenning, Smith, Rochovska and Swiatek's study (2010) highlight a combination of strategies used to balance household budgets and social reproduction, one of which was accessing formal, informal, and kinship based financial assistance. Families in this study drew from marginal employment, they bought second-hand and mended clothes, and produced food at home while waiting for social welfare benefits. While some families relied on migrant remittances to supplement their daily/monthly survival, many had to borrow in order to make ends meet from one month to the next. The latter group mostly preferred loans from close networks or pawn lenders for smaller loans while they turned to bigger and formal institutions such as national and international banks for larger loans, if they qualified.

From this literature, it can be ascertained that in post-socialist countries individuals and families who used to be working class have started to combine several income resources, under more precarious conditions because of the lack of socialist state economy (and the second economy) in order to ensure their social reproduction. In tandem, they replaced the care and social welfare resources which were previously identified with state institutions with those which relied on private and non-state networks and resources (Read & Thelen, 2007). Macrostructural changes in the political economy were marked by neoliberal economic policies which ranged from changing sectors of production, and the introduction of privatization in production, to the introduction of global capital into the national economy in the form of banks and (multinational) companies. The accompanying social reproduction organization saw cutbacks in social provision payments along with the introduction of new criterion to qualify for these

benefits. As a result, families assessed their options amidst new national and global political economy and its accompanying macrostructural prospects.

Georgia underwent a similar economic transition. However, dissimilar local political and economic conditions accentuated certain social reproduction strategies over others, especially the outmigration of women. Distinctively, the introduction of neoliberal policies did not happen all at once but over an extended period of time due to civil unrest which lasted several years and the Russian assaults which meant land grabs and various sanctions on Georgian individuals and Georgian produce. Another significant issue raised by the respondents in this study, one much less explored in the literature, was the borrowing patterns, particularly from private banks. As families took loans from these banks to finance their social reproductive needs under the compounding neoliberal economic and war-like political conditions, the need for higher and prolonged remittances increased. These brought a new wave of strain on Georgians' social reproduction processes, and created and sustained a gender specific passage to Turkey's labour market. The following two sections outline the nature and degree of dispossessions that participants experienced following the Georgian Socialist State's demise in 1991. The first section relates to dispossessions experienced due to the fall of socialist system while the second is on the effects of Russian aggression towards Georgia.



### **3.4. HISTORY OF GEORGIA'S INDEPENDENCE**

Georgia gained its independence from the Soviet rule on 31 March 1991. The country immediately moved into a democratic regime and elected its first president Zviad Gamsakhurdia. His assassination by the opposition just seven months after his election was followed by a civil war which lasted from 1991 to 1995. At the end of this period the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) had fallen by 72% because of the plunge in industrial output, real income, consumption and capital investment (Badurashvili & Nadareishvili, 2012). This war ended when Edward Shevardnadze was elected as president in 1995. Shevardnadze's rule ended in 2003 as a result of massive peaceful protests known as the "Rose Revolution". His rule was marked by corruption, economic mismanagement and election fraud which brought discontent and led to the Revolution. The Rose Revolution is seen as an important political turning point in Georgia's history, not in the least because it was backed by then-president George W. Bush and supported by other Western countries (Papava, 2006). It marked the beginning of a "pro-West" (p.660) era for Georgia, as opposed to Shevardnadze's close alignment with the Soviet regime and its current heir, Russia. Saakashvili of United National Movement won the consecutive two elections after the Rose Revolution (in 2004 and 2008) and continued to build closer relations with the United States, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU). The next two elections saw different political parties take power: Giorgi Margvelashvili of Georgian Dream Party in 2013; and Salome Zurbishvili (independent) in 2018. These last two presidents are known to be more pro-Russian (Newnham, 2015).

Neoliberal policies continued to be implemented throughout these politically tumultuous times although erratically. Before independence, Georgia had a strong economy which was based on a large industrial sector producing cars and military aircrafts, as well as ceramic products (Wade, 2017). Moreover, Georgia was the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' (USSR) vacation spot in summer and winter, and it sold its wine, mineral water and fruit to Soviet Russia in exchange for manufactured products (Newnham, 2015). After independence, Georgia saw its factories demolished and even sold as scrap metal (Wade, 2017). At the same time, massive privatizations masterminded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank had gone into effect (ibid). The former expanded credit for currency reforms and for the country to build its own financial system, while the latter extended expertise for health care reforms. However, it was not long until the civil war started. Papava (2006) calls the period of civil war (1991-1995) as "the years of disregarding economics" (p.658) during which time the government had no discernible income source nor a budget. Liberalization of prices accompanied by falling production, hyperinflation and a massively devalued coupon currency marked this period (ibid). Papava (2013) describes the following years' economy as follows: "...shortly after the end of civil war (1995), Georgia introduced its new currency (Georgian Lari [GEL]), all former government owned banks were privatized, external trade was fully liberalized, and foreign debt was restructured (p. 26-27)". Important to note here is that despite the presence of new currency, as most of the banks are foreign owned, mortgage and bank loans have become denominated in US Dollars (USD) (Wade, 2017). During this time, until the Rose Revolution, steady economic growth had been reached and inflation was stabilized, although budgetary deficits continued due to failures in collecting taxes and increased internal and external

debt. As a result, public sector workers and pensioners were not paid their salaries and pensions, while the International Monetary Fund stopped its loans to the country. After the Rose Revolution (2003), together with the re-launch of a large-scale privatization program, a new labor code which limited the rights of employees and expanded those of employers was introduced. Also during this time, foreign capital (Russian, Arab) started to invest in the Georgian economy (ibid). In the meantime, because of massive emigration from Georgia, the remittances grew in importance for the national budget, with a significant increase of more than 500 percent between 2004 and 2014 (OECD, 2017) and constituting ten percent of the national income. The introduction of a “progressive” tax legislation in 2004 saw the budgetary crises as described above resolved and the International Monetary Fund renewed its programs (Papava, 2013, p.58-59).

This tax legislation, however, did not bring a reinvestment in industrial development strategy (Wade, 2017) and it further highlights how the state has gradually minimized its role in redistribution of resources and relatedly, social provisions. Of particular importance here are those services which were fully socialized during the Soviet time because their privatization was identified as key factors by the participants of this study to augment their families’ need for cash. Privatization of health care was completed incrementally between 1994 and 2007. It slowly moved from the introduction of a few health insurance companies which helped the wealthier access certain diagnostic services which were not available at the state hospitals, to a complete privatization of healthcare including the institutional infrastructure, healthcare provision and insurance industry (Schechter, 2011). The latter, a radical move, meant acquiring private health insurance where most Georgians could not even pay the premiums, not to mention very

pricy non-refundable pharmaceutical costs (Schechter, 2011). Another step at letting market forces take over in social reproduction was seen in the phased privatization of education. Chankseliani (2014) describes this process as follows: Shortly after independence and during the civil war, as the state did not have the funds, the schools started to charge families, both formally and informally, for infrastructure maintenance, admission, school supplies and teacher salaries. After the civil war, private schools, private tutoring and universities mushroomed while at the same time public higher education institutions also started to charge tuition fees. By 2009, a final reform agenda under the tutelage of the World Bank's "Adjustable Program Loan for the Education System Realignment and Strengthening Program" (p. 8) introduced a centrally standardized and administered exam for high education as well as a quality based grading scheme for institutions to animate competition between pupils and institutions (Chankseliani, 2014).

Georgian migrant women's losses after independence, during and after "shock therapy" reforms, and civil war may be analyzed under two general headings. The first is a loss of wages and income due to loss of employment based on changing production sectors, and a sexist and ageist labour market. The second is inadequate social provisions. The following section first describes an overview of participants' pre- and post-Independence wage generation activities, followed by an account of families needing more wages when there were no adequate ways of securing them.

### 3.4.1. Transition to Post-socialist Georgia

*How was life in Georgia? It was so good, everybody would prefer to work in Georgia – with good salary. Who would want this (working in Turkey)? During Soviet times we used to live very well. We then fell from a high place like this to down, all of a sudden (hand gesturing down). In one day, we lost electricity, gas, salary, bank savings. (Ruhsen, 6 September 2016, Istanbul)*

Ruhsen's words capture the collective experience of Georgian migrant women who lived and worked in Soviet Georgia. This group constituted 80 percent of the interviewees, and the majority of anonymous participants. Granted that some of migrant women's accounts may have been coloured by nostalgia, thematic patterns arising from their migration histories are in line with what have been delineated in the literature on post-Socialism, such as the disappearance of good paying jobs and loss of social state provisions.

The end of the Soviet regime marked a turning point in Georgian families' lives. Before Independence, participants listed several combinations of income generation strategies in their families. These consisted of salaried jobs and farming which were sometimes supplemented with men's short-term migration for work to Soviet Russia. Moreover, they received state support both as free access to socialized services and as benefit cheques. Every single strategy was either obliterated or severely curtailed over the years following Georgia's independence (1991). The civil war (1992-1995) further amplified the hardships that families endured. Natural gas which was used to heat houses and cooking was cut, many women had to burn wood and learn to cook on one burner gas

stoves. Electricity and water were rationed: the former was only available a few times a day, and the latter only once a day. The Russian Ruble was abandoned and new currency coupons circulated instead while a ration system was implemented. This period was marked by long waits in queues for bread, darkness, and roaming soldiers and insurgents. Many families, while trying to make money for their family sustenance, also had to leave food out for soldiers or insurgents, as they would come and eat in random houses at will.

The end of the civil war did not result in economic prosperity. Families faced a series of new macrostructural challenges which continuously depleted their earnings. As a result, Georgian families turned to alternative strategies, the main choice being outmigration. Emigration from Georgia steadily increased since Independence, reaching a point where one-fifth of the population now lives and works abroad (Geostat, 2016). Remittances became a life-line for households. According to a recent study, the remittances constitute half or three-quarters of their family's budget, and in fifteen percent of cases, they constitute their family's only source of income (State Commission on Migration Issues, 2017).

My research revealed similar findings. Migrant women's income in Turkey, although a major contribution, was generally not the only source of cash in their family budgets. With a few exceptions, all households had members who worked in Georgia for a wage, or who were self-employed. One third of migrant households had one or two (extra) emigrants working abroad. Respondents reported that they still received benefit cheques from the state, however minimal, depending on their household composition. Half of the interviewees owned lands and/or fruit gardens which brought some income. I

first provide an overview of the past and current salaried job opportunities and conditions encountered by migrant women and their family members.

### 3.4.2. Lost Jobs, Lost Times, Lost Values In Gendered Labour Markets

*Men can't (serve). That's our tradition. Men work at the factories, like a shoe factory.*

*They drive buses, cars. Like that. Serving should be done by women (Nimet, 20 December 2016, Istanbul).*

Before and after the civil war, people continued to lose means of making money and money lost its buying power. Although there was no or little cash coming into households, expenses steadily increased. For instance, in Soviet Georgia salaries of 150-200 GEL<sup>4</sup> (75-90 USD) used to produce surplus which could be put away in the banks (A detailed exchange rate between USD, Turkish Lira and Georgian Lari can be found in *Appendix E*). Electricity used to cost about ten GEL per month (four and a half USD), bread 15 pence (six cents USD), and one kilogram of meat was two and half GEL (twenty-five cents USD). By comparison in 2016, the bills were about 300 GEL (130 USD) for electricity per month, 230 GEL (100 USD) for natural gas and 24 GEL (ten USD) per kilogram for meat. In general, salaries remain low in Georgia. The salaries of respondents' families at the time of my field work hovered around 250-400 GEL (100 to 160 USD). Nurses earned 350 to 400 GEL a month (130-150 USD). Bank employees earned about 500 to 600 GEL (210-260 USD) while a street cleaner made 400 GEL (150 USD). It was clear that even for households which had three different wages coming in

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<sup>4</sup> All currency figures are 2016 figures.

(maximum 450 USD), a migrant woman in Turkey made more than the three combined (minimum 500 USD)<sup>5</sup>.

On the other hand, it is a luxury to have three members of a family work for wages in Georgia. It is difficult to find jobs commensurate to one's age, gender, education and experience, more specifically for those participants (and their cohorts) who worked in Soviet Georgia. After Independence, Georgian economic sectors serving the Soviet Union and its citizens through working class jobs, such as in tourism, holiday and health travel disappeared. In addition, manufacturing factories closed. Georgian migrant women's life and work histories in Soviet times suggest that their husbands used to work in the above-mentioned sectors and some held government jobs such as gym teachers and police officers. The jobs held in factories were listed as engineers, technicians, and factory or tourism sector managers for university graduates, and carpenter, shoemaker, and ceramic tile master for those without university degrees. The participants themselves used to be either housewives, music teachers, preschool teachers, administrative assistants, or nurses. One participant worked as train conductor, another was assistant manager at a bookstore, and one worked at a Soviet bank. As factories and the tourism sector closed, salaries stopped. For those few families who still had their jobs there was no guarantee that they would receive their next paycheque. One or even two salaried jobs did not generate enough cash, so some respondents actually quit their jobs –such as teachers– because their salaries remained the same as Soviet times, thus losing value in the hyperinflation occurring throughout the first years of Independence.

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<sup>5</sup> The study group's salaries ranged from USD 500 to USD 1000. See *Appendix C*



Once new sectors formed in Georgia it still was not easy for men to find jobs. In Georgia, the labour market is quite gendered in that it is considered “embarrassing” for men to be working in public in the service sector, especially in serving and caring jobs. Many participants brought this up during our conversations comparing Turkey with Georgia. Nilay, for example, observed the following:

Men in Georgia and Turkey are different. Turkish men do a lot of jobs, like they take the garbage out. They work at markets, bazaars, or as garbage men. But Georgian men would not. They are proud, their pride would not allow such jobs. It is different. They would not work in public places, not out in the open where people can see you (Nilay, 15 December 2016, Istanbul).

Migrant women also expressed that they were shocked when they first noticed (women’s) hair salons being operated by men, Turkish men selling underwear and bras in Turkish bazaars, selling lemons and water in the street, or those who work as sales associates and as waiters. Indeed, in Georgia, most service jobs are seen as women’s jobs, because the “art” (for service jobs) belongs to women. My field observations showed that in pharmacies women were invariably pharmacists (because they hand out the medication) and men, security guards. In the banks, markets, clothing and second-hand shops, telephone offices, women constituted the majority of workers if not exclusively all. Men, on the other hand, were behind the wheels as drivers, workers in construction sites or worked within the walls of mechanic shops and factories. In restaurants women served as waitresses and men worked as chefs, though this had started to change as some young men were waiting too during my visit. Thus, after independence men’s options for work became quite constrained in a job market which already had fewer openings.

In 2016-2017 many migrant women's husbands were working as handymen/interior constructors, or drivers, although the former were dependent on economic up- and downturns: they were only hired when there was money to upgrade houses. Other male members reportedly combined farming and other seasonal jobs -such as working as a chef during summer and farming in the remaining months of the year, or migrating to Turkey for seasonal hazelnut picking or other jobs. Working class men's migration to Turkey had been a mixed luck affair. My conversations with men, especially older men, revealed the ways in which men and women had to rework livelihoods and living arrangements. One telling example is the men in Zerrin's family. Zerrin who was working in Istanbul for eight years has a husband and two married daughters who have their own children. One of the daughters and her husband worked in Turkey without documents while their children lived under Zerrin's other daughter's care. I met Zerrin's husband and their son-in-law in Kutaisi. Zerrin and her husband both lost their job (as a stenographer and depot manager respectively) after the sanatorium in Kutaisi (see the photo above) closed shortly after Georgia's independence. The sanatorium was one of the many health sector institutions which used to employ hundreds of employees during Soviet times and served mostly Soviet clients. Rendered unemployed at age 45 after the closure, Zerrin's husband followed his wife to Istanbul. He worked at a textile factory (for less than Turkish minimum wage: 1300 TL [410 USD per month]) but became sick of the fumes used in bleaching jeans and returned to Kutaisi. At the time of our interview, he lived with her daughter and grandchildren. He sometimes helped with the grandchildren but mostly spent time in socializing with his male friends.

Zerrin's son-in-law on the other hand, was much younger and had not seen Soviet Georgia. He had nevertheless migrated to Turkey with his wife, partly because he had wanted to be with his wife, and partly because the salaries were higher in Turkey. However, in 2016 he was deported from Turkey after eight years, and worked as a police officer in Georgia while living in an apartment on his own. He used to make 1500 TL (slightly less than Turkish minimum wage: USD 450) in Turkey a month as an auto-mechanic (which he spent on cigarettes and alcohol by his own admission). In contrast, at the time of our meeting he only made 300 GEL (USD 115) a month which was barely enough to cover his own expenses which consisted of some food but mostly of cigarettes and alcohol. He was waiting for the deportation wait period to be over and was interested in going to Istanbul rather than Europe, because "after all, Istanbul is Europe". In the meantime, his children were taken care of by her sister-in-law with the help of the remittances sent by his wife and mother-in-law.

I also met Georgian men who seemed more settled in rotational migration. Many had gone to Turkey for periods of time. For example, one young man who I met in a minibus which traveled from Turkey to Georgia worked in a car-cleaning business in Kemalpaşa (a small Turkish town close to the Georgian border) where his uncle had worked for the past 20 years. On his way back to Georgia after his three month shift where he had made about 3500 GEL (1400 USD), he was hopeful that after spending some time resting, he was going to open a business in Georgia. He also admitted that most probably this amount was not going to be enough to carry out his plan, so he was prepared to go back to Turkey for a few more three month shifts. Several (male) cab drivers told me that it was their short- or long-lived work experiences in Turkey which

enabled to save some money for the purchase of their cars. Overall however, whether they worked in Turkey or in Georgia, whether they possessed Soviet experience or not, men's salaries ranged from 250 GEL to 1000 GEL (95 USD to 450 USD) a month. These numbers were still lower than those of women migrants' salaries (500 to 1000 USD) and were not enough to cover family bills and expenses in Independent Georgia.

Women who worked during Soviet times reported a different kind of loss in the job market after Independence. They felt a time jolt, where they were not old enough to retire, but not young enough to be hired even in the service sector. For example, Narin, who was divorced at that time, and who did not have a university education remembered clearly the embarrassment she felt when she applied for a job as waitress in early 1990s:

I was 36 years old, and anybody that age is good looking no? They said they are looking for someone who is blonde and blue-eyed, and preferably younger, as waitress. What were they looking for? Waitress or girlfriend? (Narin, 3 August 2016, Istanbul).

This time jolt was experienced by well-educated and experienced women as well. For instance, Ruhsen used to work as a manager at a Soviet bank. Despite 15 years of experience, she was not hired in the new banks that opened in independent Georgia due to her older age: "When they reopened, they were all looking for younger employees. Only young people work there" (Ruhsen, 6 September 2016, Istanbul)

This situation still continues, as some of the participants considered returning to Georgia and thus inquired about jobs. Nermin gave an example:

Now in the past ten years, there have been new jobs created, but for younger people. They do not hire older people for these jobs. For example, (...) I am preschool teacher, I could find a job there. But it is only 300 Lari (130 USD per month), what will I do with that money? I was in fact thinking that I would never come back to Turkey, and that 300 Lari would be enough for me. But they do not want anybody my age anymore. When I was looking for a job, they kept asking me how old I was. When they heard 45-50, they kept saying “no, no, there is no job”. They only want younger people (8 January 2017, Istanbul).

The dispossessions with regards to one’s life experience, professional knowledge and personal achievements in the context of post-socialism have been observed in Georgia (Gotfredsen, 2016). Gotfredsen (2016), in her study of post-socialist identities in Georgia, shows that “middle-aged” and “elderly” people (p. 248) who had worked in a town considered to be a model Soviet industrial production town found that their attributes and resources could not be counted on for achieving a social status. These individuals were struggling with unemployment as well as a loss of their memories and dreams in new Georgia. Gotfredsen (2016) suggests that they were politically and economically marginalized after Independence, because of their association with the Soviet past which had no place in political visions of Georgia’s present or the future. Similarly, the participants in my study and their relatives who worked in jobs which were commensurate to their gender, education and wage expectations in Soviet Georgia, permanently lost their position in Independent Georgia’s labour markets. Although new jobs in novel sectors were equally gender segregated, age became an additional

discriminatory factor. Migrant women's households also had younger members who worked for wages, yet these wages were not enough to cover the ever-increasing expenses due to hyperinflation and lack of state sponsored services. The next section outlines how Georgian migrant women's families had to contend with the emergent medical and education bills.

### 3.4.3. Social Provisions

Families faced big losses in their social safety net which included their savings as well as social provisions consisting of pensions, education, child benefit and health care. Many participants had economized before Independence but the Socialist banks took all the cash in their safes as they pulled out of Georgia. Bank account holders reported that they lost their life-long savings, some upwards to 200,000 GEL (80,000 USD). The pension system, which was indexed to years of service, was abolished. About one-fifth of the study's participants were over the age of 60, and most others had parents or in-laws who were in that age bracket. Zehra, for example, who was 69 years at the time of our interview calculated that she would have received a 1700 GEL (700 USD) retirement salary due to her work record of 22 years under the Socialist system, rather than the 180 GEL (70 USD) pension she was receiving in 2016. She left that salary to her son and his family in Georgia while she worked for 650 USD per month in Turkey. In 2016, all women over 60 and men over 65 years of age received the same old age pension of 180 GEL (70 USD) which meant that those who worked during the Soviet times lost the benefit of the number of years that they had worked during that time. According to Sevda, whose mother in law had just started receiving her pension in 2015, this pension would

only buy 20 kilograms of flour, which the family would use to bake bread because it was cheaper than buying from the store.

Other social provisions which were offered to families during Soviet Georgia ended as well. A participant who worked at a Soviet bank before Independence summed them up as follows:

Everything was free, schools, hospitals, holidays were free. Everybody worked. I went to university. Whenever you attended university if you were a good student they would give you money. University used to give me money. Now we give them money. Then they gave me money every month (stipend). My son's university, we had to pay. Whenever I finished university my job was ready, the director told me "here is your job, go start". I got my diploma after I started working. Now my son finished good university, they don't care, "go find whatever job". But in communist times, they used to get your job for you, the university. Before, if you were a good student the university doors were open to you, but now the university doors are open to whoever has the money.

(Anonymous participant 3, 1 June 2016, Istanbul)

This quote is indicative of the cash demand on family budgets who have children. Even though grade schools are still free, participants with children mentioned that paying for private tutors became a common expense because of increased competition in securing admission to a university. Competition was particularly tough due to concerns for securing a partial or full scholarship because the average tuition fee was 1700 GEL (740 USD) per student. Moreover, the governmental child benefit decreased significantly. In Soviet Georgia, the government used to issue cheques of support for children to families; every month until they turned 12. Mothers who lost their husbands had access to even

more support and for a longer period of time. In contrast, in 2016 the government provided only one-time help to families upon the birth of children. Working class families were also entitled to free housing in Soviet times. In 2016, participants still were residing in their houses, with the exception of a few participants forced to sell them. Georgians who were renting in Tbilisi had to spare 350 to 400 GEL (150 to 175 USD) in lower middle-class neighbourhoods that I visited. Others who wanted to become homeowners by buying an apartment in one of the newly constructed high rises in Tbilisi should be prepared to pay between 900 USD to 3300 USD per square meter.

The biggest challenge, however, were the exorbitant medical bills. As mentioned earlier, Georgia followed a gradual shift to full privatization of health care services. I observed that this included dentistry, pre-natal care, diagnostic services, and sale of medicine. These became regular and steep expenses as many families either had members who were chronically ill, or faced acute conditions like sudden serious illnesses or medical care after accidents. Prices were particularly high for medication. In 2016 one single capsule of pain medication was three GEL (one and a half USD), and one Three-D rental X-Ray cost 50 GEL (21 USD).

I met Nazli and her husband in Istanbul. They both used to be teachers who had not been paid properly after Independence, but were able to survive thanks to their gardens until 2013 with not much difficulty. They told me that they (still) had good income from their hazelnut gardens and grew their own food which included a wide variety of produce. It was their grandchild who was chronically ill and who had to pass 23 operations which led the couple to borrow about 22,000 GEL (9,000 USD). In addition to



this debt, they also had to afford medication. One pill of that medication was 60 GEL (25 USD) while the state aid was only 48 GEL (20 USD) per month for the sick child. As a result, Nazli worked in Istanbul as a caregiver and her husband used the three months on/three months off visa to work as a construction worker in Istanbul. During his three months in Georgia, he took care of their hazelnut gardens with their son's help. Several other respondents also had to borrow under similar circumstances when their husbands or parents-in-law fell sick.

Georgia's neoliberal economic choices decreased state involvement and slashed socialized welfare and redistribution policies. The effects were twofold: Serious loss of income due to diminished state aid as benefit cheques, and an amplified need for cash to access previously socialized services. Now, I turn to two other customary income generation strategies which Georgian families relied on before and shortly after Independence, until they were almost completely destroyed by Russian aggression.

### **3.5. RUSSIAN INTERVENTIONS**

Between Independence (1991) and now, Russia has been a critical factor in Georgia's political life, economy and families' livelihood strategies. Russia's military and political interventions, along with economic sanctions often compounded the negative effects of Georgian post-socialist transition economic conditions. Participants who felt the brunt of Russia's mighty macrostructural power mentioned two specific ways in which they further experienced dispossessions. First was the cessation of migration opportunities. Second was loss of income from their farms and gardens. These two strategies had long been used by Georgian families with precedents established in Soviet

times and by the end of 2008 they were not available anymore. This process of dispossessions unfolded over the years and involved military aggression, visa policy alterations and embargos.

Newnham (2015) argues that such political and economic sanctions are a direct reflection of Russia's desire to maintain its influence on ex-Soviet states. The pressures took a particular toll on Georgia because of its weak economic situation and economic reliance on Russia (ibid). One of these coercions was to change visa regulations concerning Georgian citizens following the escalating tension between the two countries. After Independence, Georgia joined the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and thus accepted visa regulations of the pact. According to these regulations which took effect in 1992, former USSR country citizens were allowed to travel to other former USSR countries freely. Russia started to impose more stringent rules on Georgian citizens from 2001 onward, starting with visa requirements. In 2006 Russia carried out a mass deportation of Georgians following accusations of espionage. Following this, during the Russo-Georgia war in 2008 Russia sent its troops which were in the Georgian provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia into deeper Georgian territory in support of these two provinces' bid for independence. Subsequently both countries established arduous visa granting process towards each other's citizens. Currently, Russian troops are still in these two Georgian territories. Georgian citizens are only awarded a visa to travel to Russia if they are invited by very close relatives. Visa regulations towards Georgian citizens may be loosened. After the European Commission released its positive visa liberalisation progress report for Georgia, Russia gave indication that it may also cancel its visa regime with Georgia (Agenda, 2017).

Such rigid visa requirements resulted in a significant loss of employment opportunities for Georgians. Contrary to the Eastern bloc countries, Georgians used to experience the Soviet Union as an open space where they could travel without restrictions and much financial burden (Muhlfried, 2014). These travels were for leisure and/or for short-term employment opportunities. Circular emigration to Russia has also a long history in Georgia. In Soviet times the regular out-streams consisted of mostly male labour brigades who worked for short term contracts in labour short regions and women, in much smaller numbers, emigrated mostly for family, education and/or short-term work in Russia (Hofmann & Buckley, 2013). This trend increasingly continued after Independence (Newnham, 2015) until it came to a halt in 2008.

For example, men in Tumay's family tried their luck in Russia after Independence, before she came to Turkey for work:

During the communist times men used to be able to go often for work. But my father in law always had a good job. He was the head of two villages, like a reeve. Then, everything went bad, he was not paid properly so he had to quit. After that, my husband, my father in law and my brother in law, all went to Russia. Men used to do this, they used to go for a few months and make money (Tumay, 15 January 2017, Istanbul)

Having men migrate to Russia was a strategy that Tumay's family undertook before having women migrate. When talking about their lives in Soviet times, respondents mentioned that they traveled often to other countries of the USSR, by plane, at extremely discounted prices. They also echoed that Georgian men used to migrate regularly for short term work to Russia before and after Independence. Now, this auxiliary alternative

is not available to Georgian families and consequently they have to consider other -and onerous- forms of migration for income generation.

More significant harm for families' material wellbeing was caused by the war and economic sanctions. Before and after Independence, Georgian economy was quite dependent on trade relationship with Russia (Newnham, 2015). Newnham (2015) explains further that Russia's economic pressures on Georgia were twofold: 1. Energy sanctions, and 2. Trade sanctions. In relation to the former, between the years 2004 and 2008, Russia continuously threatened Georgia by cutting its power and natural gas supplies, and often times followed through on with these threats. However, although left in cold and dark several times, nowadays Georgia has access to cheaper and more secure energy supplies. Trade sanctions, on the other hand, hit the Georgian economy harder. During Soviet times and after Independence, Georgian agricultural products were almost exclusively sold to Russia. Starting with a ban on "Georgian wine" in 2006, by the end of 2012 Russia had decreased its exports from Georgia such as fruits and mineral water by more than 90 percent (Newnham, 2015). This is an impact of great magnitude, considering that more than 50% of the Georgian population's livelihood is still based on agriculture (Geostat, 2017).

Migrant women shared their experiences of losing income from their gardens and farms repeatedly. More than half of the participants themselves and almost all of their parents owned and/or worked in gardens and farms. It was clear that families predominantly did agricultural production but did not rely on them as sole income. In other words, this income, although substantial, was supplemented by salaried jobs (when available). As mentioned earlier, Georgia used to be known for its fresh fruit and wine in Soviet Russia, due to its warmer and sunnier climate. The Soviet system sponsored the

cultivation, harvesting, and processing of these products. *Kolkhoz*<sup>6</sup> was where many respondents and their parents worked during the Soviet times. *Kolkhoz* workers used to be paid salaries, in addition Soviet officials used to come and buy the produce that they grew on their gardens paying per kilogram. Some also used to sell their produce to fruit juice factories.

After Independence, families had less cash coming into the household due to the loss of jobs. Families who had substantial agricultural land were still able to generate some income to sustain themselves, although with augmented costs. Melahat from Gori explained the difficult situation:

Before, we used to have *Kolkhoz*. Then everybody started to own their own, and everybody started to need money. Like, I don't have money, how will I buy pesticide? It became really bad. Before, they used to give us everything to take care of the land, like pesticides, and seeds. In socialist times, the state gave us everything, we cared for the land and fruits and they paid us salary. People used to go in the morning, come in the evening. Everything, like garlic, beans, onions, corn. Then they used to sell them, and also give us money from the sales.

(Melahat, 29 July 2016, Istanbul)

Despite lack of cash and increased expenses, respondents who were able to farm continued to sell their produce to Russia until the Russo-Georgian war (2008). The war brought losses. Some respondents' houses and crops were ruined that year due to bombing and soldiers' activities, while others were not able to go into their gardens for years afterward because of unexploded landmines. Some even completely lost their

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<sup>6</sup> Collective farms in the Soviet Union

houses and gardens because they used to live in territories which are now under Russian supervision. Ugur is a migrant woman whose parents worked in *kolkhoz* which she inherited after they passed away. Before Independence she used to sell produce from her land while both she and her husband used to hold salaried jobs. She told me what happened after Independence and particularly after the 2008 Russo-Georgian war:

In our Georgia, we also have good produce, like lemon and oranges from Batumi, and apples, pears, quince, cherries, plums from my hometown are famous. I have a great garden. But our big market was Russia. They used to come with trucks, they used to buy, they used to give us a lot of money. Once the roads closed, everything stopped. We started throwing away the fruit, or sell them very cheaply. Now it is closed, thus it is very difficult (...)

Like I used to collect 6 tons of peaches per year, 30-35 tons of apple. But that latter (apple) garden, Russians took it away from us. It is now behind the border (Ugur, 3 July 2016, Istanbul).

Once Russia closed the borders and placed an embargo on Georgian produce, farmers started to shoulder the increasing costs of seeds, and pesticides and sometimes they had to hire labour and buy tractors. Thus, agriculture became quite costly. At the same time, the opportunity to sell crops for reasonable prices disappeared. Migrant women whose families owned gardens or farms told me that nowadays they were trying to sell their produce in the Georgian market but because most produce was similar across Georgia, and due to the economic conditions, the proceeds were very low.

I have so far described conditions which dispossessed migrant women and their families from their livelihood strategies. Each of these conditions, loss of salaried jobs,

diminished salaries and access to labour markets, decreased benefit payments, lack of access to short term male outmigration, and loss of land or profitable agricultural practices, singularly or in combination meant huge income losses. On the other hand, expenses increased due to hyperinflation and costs that were previously associated with state sponsored provisions such as health care, education and agriculture support. There was one final feature of Independent Georgia which should be counted in the scope of Georgian families' dispossessions: the new practices of borrowing and repayment of debt. This is what will be examined next.

### **3.6. DISPOSESSIONS AND DEBT**

*The debt was about food. After the war there was no money, we needed food. It was from the bank. Was it for business? Yes, it was for business, but also for food (Merve, 19 June 2016).*

Borrowing to finance migrations whether from relatives or usurers, or recruitment agencies, and migration brokers is commonly reported in the general migration literature. Georgian migrant women in this study did not borrow funds to come to Turkey because they did not need to (it only cost \$50 to buy a bus ticket), although some of them financed earlier unsuccessful attempts to migrate or other family members' migration to Europe. More importantly, invariably all of them rather borrowed to mitigate the effects of the post-Soviet transition economy which resulted in depressed incomes and elevated expenses. A cycle of borrowing from loan sharks as well as private banks started shortly after Independence as people looked for money to start businesses, to finance migrations or just to be able to afford food, medication and other unexpected expenses such as funerals, and accidents, often at the same time or with short intervals. Such borrowing

shows parallels with the critical consequences of micro-credit financing as outlined at the beginning of this chapter, in that, these kinds of loans were used by Georgian families to fund small and vulnerable informal or entrepreneurial sector work and to finance what had previously been available to them as common or subsidized goods such as health care (Keating, Rasmussen & Rishi, 2010). On this last point, Georgian families' borrowing patterns also show parallels to concerns in securing social reproductive needs in the face of "(re)privatisation of social reproduction" which are common to families across wealthier and poorer countries and which involve a combination of cuts to social spending, privatization of healthcare and education, and shrinking wages, benefits and pensions (Bakker & Gill, 2008; Bezanson & Luxton, 2006). As people become more forced to take on waged employment which is increasingly more precarious (and certainly less available in former Soviet Union States such as Georgia) they are reported to turn to risky formal and informal strategies which reportedly may range from waste picking to debt bondage (LeBaron, 2014). Under such conditions borrowing is considered as a form of dispossession and becomes a forced part of strategy to finance social reproduction - whether for sustenance and/or migrations. In the case of Georgian families, the loans did not translate into consistent income and had to be repaid quickly, and with high interest. Hence, servicing debt became one fundamental motivation for cross-border migration.

People either borrowed from (new) banks or from usurers, both with high interest. Although I am not privy to usurers' specific interest rates I was told that they were even higher than those of private banks. Besides the National Bank which was founded in 1991, there are many banks giving loans in Georgia, many of which were privatized in mid 1990s. They have been charging high interest rates on loans, for example 15.4% in October 2015, down from 18.6% in 2012 (Atanelishvili & Silagadze, 2016). To borrow



from banks requires registering collaterals such as houses, gold, or a salary. Migrant women explained how this process worked: people take a few pieces of gold to the bank and leave them there for (as an example) 2000 USD in return. Each month they have to make interest payments until they are able to put together the 2000 USD in full and give it back to the bank, at which time their gold will be returned. Most families employed their only belongings left from Soviet times, that is their houses and sometimes jewellery, as collateral in order to borrow from banks.

To reiterate, migrating to Turkey did not require borrowing, but at least two interviewees and several other anonymous participants tried to migrate to other countries before going to Turkey. This was a costly affair. During my stay in Tbilisi in 2016 clandestine “travel agents” arranged visa and passage to many countries -with the full knowledge that migrants may overstay their visa once they go those countries. They had the following schedule for securing visa: passage to Greece cost 4,000 USD; to Europe 2,500 USD + airfare, and to Canada 15,000 to 20,000 USD. Meryem had a long of story of taking loans for various purposes, one of which was migration:

I had lots of debt. I came here for money. After Independence, and the (civil) war, I took credit from the bank and used it to open a market. I opened a grocery store, like Migros. Then it went down. It was busy, crowded. At first I was able to make the monthly repayments, but after Saakashvili<sup>7</sup>, it became more difficult and I could not pay. Because there used to be a lot regulations, control, and fees. Also, before, I used to bring goods from Russia, people really liked those, they bought a lot. After that, (the Russo-Georgian war) buying from Russia was banned. They

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<sup>7</sup> President of Georgia between 2004-2012 -elected the first time after Rose Revolution and president of the country during Russo-Georgian war in 2008.

said to buy local. Then people did not want to buy those products, and the profit went down. Following this I wanted to go to Italy, I borrowed seven thousand dollars (USD) from a usurer. When I could not pay back that on time, the sum doubled. I was going to Italy through Ukraine but I was illegal. Ukraine did not let me go through. So that was seven thousand... I then decided to go to Turkey. Now I work just to pay the bank. I have ten thousand more left. But I pay little by little. (Meryem, 11 June 2016, Istanbul).

Meryem's story is exemplary in that it shows the various stages of dispossessing events after Georgia's Independence through which she had to borrow multiple times, from multiple sources. Meryem and her husband had lost their salaried jobs after Independence and in search for new ways of generating income she realized that she needed capital. Although she was able to sustain her family for a while through her entrepreneurial skills, the Russo-Georgian war, and the subsequent unsuccessful attempt to migrate to Italy amplified her debt severely. Similarly, several other respondents started businesses with loans that all went sour as the economic and civil unrest reigned (1991-1994), which resulted in families not being able to pay back the monthly interest, let alone the capital. A few other migrant women told me that their businesses went down during the civil war as there were not enough customers with cash for shopping, and that there were regular robberies of shops. Nimet, for example, was robbed of the goods which she had acquired with the intention to resell during the civil unrest,

After 1991 I worked in trade. But it did not work, and I incurred debts. I took loans from the bank. I took a lot. Then I bought stuff in Baku (Azerbaijan) and they were stolen. I was left at zero. We were three women, we all ended up with

great loans. I incurred great debt at that time. That's it. Otherwise I really did not want to come to Turkey (Nimet, 20 December 2016, Istanbul)

Apart from setting up new business in order to create new cash resources, families also tried to boost their existing revenues, such as expanding agriculture operations. One such example is Pelin, who used to own land in the town where the Russo-Georgian war took place. In her words:

I used to work as a nurse before. I was fired from that. They told me that I was too old to work here. They wanted younger people. So after the (civil) war I took credit from the bank. I took credit because I wanted to take care of the garden: to make it bigger, to collect more. After two months of war my whole garden was ruined, I could not take care of it. So I needed money to restore it. I remember, the war was in August. Bombs were dropped in the gardens. It was forbidden to enter the gardens because of the unexploded bombs. Some people entered and bombs exploded. The state gave us 250 lari as help. Can you imagine, what good is it? We were in such bad shape that we could not afford to buy bread. So the money that we borrowed, most of it was used to buy food only, not to restore the garden... Five thousand dollars I had borrowed. You work, but it is not enough to pay back (Pelin, 17 July 2016, Istanbul).

Consequently, Pelin followed her sister and sister-in-law who were working in Turkey as migrant care givers there. At the time of our interview, she was about to finish paying her debt while in the meantime supporting her adult children because the produce from her gardens did not bring much revenue anymore. Apart from such business losses and attempted migrations, migrant women also borrowed for expected and non-expected life-stage events. Earlier, I mentioned how medical bills became a drain on Georgian families'

budgets (see Nazli above who had to borrow 9000 USD for her grandchild's operations and very expensive medication). Several other respondents also had to borrow under similar circumstances when their husbands or parents-in-law fell ill. Loans were also taken for funerals which may cost up to 7000 GEL (2800 USD) to cover the cost of the special coffin and *supra*<sup>8</sup>. A medium sized wedding, which includes ceremony, gold and *suprs* may cost about 16,000 GEL (about 7,000 USD).

Taken together, Georgian migrant women's borrowing was not tied to only one cause at a time. They had to borrow for several reasons simultaneously. The major underlying concern was to provide income for sustenance. On the other hand, even if migrant women finished repaying debt, incomes that came into their Georgian households were still not enough to pay for regular expenses such as food and education, let alone medical bills, essential renovations and cultural observances. Even for households which had three different wages coming in, a migrant woman made more than the three combined. The way remittances were spent also showed the effect of borrowing from banks. Almost half of a migrant woman's salary was allotted to debt repayment, followed by house renovations or rent. The rest was spent on regular expenses like groceries, bills, university fees, school and extra-curricular activities. For families and migrant women who did not have debt repayments and whose incomes were higher, remittances were spent on (more expensive) cars. It was clear that Georgian women still had to continue to work in Turkey, but without a clear end. The next section discusses the participants' plans for the future in light of these past events.

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<sup>8</sup> Traditional feast put together for social occasions. It includes numerous Georgian traditional dishes.

### 3.7. RENEWED LIVELIHOODS, PROTRACTED STAYS

*Humans are enough for money, but money is not enough for humans. (Ceyda, 1 January 2017, Istanbul)*

Most Georgian migrant women were ambivalent about their futures. They were torn between going back to Georgia and continuing their work in Turkey. Even in this ambivalence one thing they were sure of, however, was that they had no plans of staying permanently in Turkey and/or bringing their families to Turkey to continue their lives. In fact, as will be shown in *chapter five*, Georgian women mostly migrated so that others in their families did not have to. Although it is possible to have regular work visa status and to acquire Turkish citizenship a number of years after that, most migrant women I talked to were not on such types of visa, nor were they interested in its advantages, namely the possibility of a retirement in Turkey and/or citizenship. Living as a family in Turkey would not be financially viable either, because women's salaries would not be enough for accommodation and sustenance of their families in Turkey. Accordingly, the respondents had their minds set on going back to Georgia and their plans revolved around this.

Georgian migrant women had plans about how long to stay in Turkey which did not materialize. By the time I was a couple of months into my fieldwork it had become a regular joke with the participants that they had come to Turkey only for “three months” or “two years” which turned into a number of years. This pattern and its realization was also reflected in discussions about the future. Ceyda's statement captured this:

when I first came here I thought I would stay two or three years. But I have been here for ten years. The money was not enough. One does not know what will

happen. I thought I'd go back and find a job, but that proved difficult (Ceyda, 1 January 2017, Istanbul).

She foresaw, like many other migrant women, that she would work in Turkey for another couple of years, but she offered a word of caution that I might find her there still if I were to return to the field three years later.

The reason behind these protracted sojourns was manifold. Perhaps the most common was the need for money. Narin, who had been working in Istanbul for 13 years explained concisely and echoed what many other respondents thought: “What to do with the money? I thought I'd buy a house and with the rest I'd start business. But money just evaporated” (Narin, 7 September 2016, Istanbul). Because she had not inherited a house from Soviet times, Narin's son and his family were still renting and thus buying a house was a priority. She was not sure about how much more time she would take to buy a house and/or start a business, thus how long she would stay in Turkey. Many migrant women who went back to Georgia for good after paying off their debt returned to Turkey later as cash ran out or new big expenses cropped up as outlined in the previous.

Some respondents reflected that they thought of returning to Georgia every three months –at which time they usually go and visit their family in Georgia. However, it was also then that most realized that the money earned only in Georgia was not enough. Others, like Ennur, acknowledge this vicious circle's effects: “With time you turn into a money machine. Now all the ropes are in your hands. It is forbidden for you to stop. If you stop these ropes will be broken. That's why you continue, whether you want or not” (Ennur, 7 August 2016, Istanbul).

Concurrently, there was the added uncertainty which was tied to their work. Many told me that they were fond of their subject(s) of care, children or older people, while others also liked the fact they were working. Accordingly, they told me that they would work until they “can’t work anymore” – at which time they would return to Georgia. Ceyda was very clear about this: “You know what I am thinking, I will do two more years of hard work, taking care of children. I love caring for children, especially small children. I would do it again and again: I would take care of children who were two years old, again and again” (Ceyda, 1 January 2017, Istanbul). For some it meant that they would be staying until they were no longer needed by their employer, that is, when their subject of care will pass away or the children will have grown up.

The prime aim of migrant women who did not own a house was to save for one. Many others looked to secure some kind of monthly income (on top of their old age pension and garden income if they had any) via different investments. One idea of investment which was contemplated by the majority of migrant women was to benefit from a “rent-for-capital” scheme. In this scheme, an agreement is drawn between the owner and renter, in which the renter gives the owner a lump sum of money in USD in return for living in the house for an “x” (usually two) number of years, during which time the residents will not pay any further rent nor can the owner sell the house. At the end of the determined period either the owner will have to return the capital intact or the parties will settle down for another number of years in the same arrangement. In earlier days of outmigration (between 1991 and 2000) even 2000 USD worth of capital was enough to afford a couple years of free rented housing, though nowadays the capital starts from 10,000 to 20,000 USD, depending on the house and neighbourhood. If one puts down

capital she should expect about 300 to 500 GEL (130 to 210 USD) per month of return, either because her family does not have to pay rent or in case that the family already has a place to live, they can sublet this place.

Other investment ideas revolved around opening a business such as hair salons, beauty parlors or food establishments -although no participant had taken any such concrete steps during my fieldwork. Obtaining a job which would bring about 500-600 GEL (210 to 260 USD) per month was also another option entertained by younger women. They believed that if they owned their house their salary would be enough to survive. Bahar (27 years old) was such one young woman who used to work in “housekeeping” at hotels in Georgia after she dropped out of university and before she came to Turkey. She used to live at her brother’s place at that time but did not want to anymore. She came to Turkey so that she could buy a house for herself. When I met her, she had only one and a half years left on her house payments which she was able to make thanks to her job in Turkey. Bahar was not married nor did she send any money to her brother and his family. She claimed that she could return to her old job of housekeeping in Georgia, and that wage would be enough for her sustenance once she did not have to pay for housing.

There are only a few respondents who were at the graceful stage of “saving only”. Most women still had debts to pay off, after which time they hoped to invest to collect some form of monthly income -whether from a “rent-to-capital” scheme, a business, or a regular salaried job -which most possibly will not be possible for older participants.

As these accounts show, most migrant women’s lives are continuing in suspension under conditions which are not of their making. They work for a life in Georgia stranded



in Turkey for an indefinite amount of time. In Ennur's words, this situation is likened to a: "prison, but I don't know when we will come out" (7 August 2016, Istanbul).

### **3.8. CONCLUSION**

Millions of labourers have become part of the global labour force from former Soviet Union countries as a result of emerging capitalist relations. In this chapter I have described the conditions which surrounded Georgian migrant women's migration as domestic labourers, with reference to both production and social reproduction relations. These conditions formed after Georgia's independence from the Soviet Union and through its effort to join the present-day global capitalism and have shaped livelihood options of Georgian families. In this process, the country became subject to resource grabbing for the purposes of capital accumulation. Drawing from a contemporary understanding of "primitive accumulation" (Marx, 1867/1990), this chapter has listed a series of non-violent and violent dispossession processes through which Georgia's and its citizens' pre-capitalism assets were usurped by and for capitalist production relations. In addition, the cost of social reproduction was largely transferred to individual families by the state.

By examining familial budget cash inputs and outputs, this chapter has demonstrated how Georgian women became subject to proletarianization under the conditions of "accumulated difference" (Federici, 2004) in terms of their ethnicity, gender, migration status, lack of skills, and debt burden. Of particular importance here is the necessity, and terms and conditions of taking loans to finance social reproduction. Indeed, debt, is considered a form of working and labour class labour discipline, which forces workers into accepting low standard, low paying jobs, postponing retirement, and

becoming more prone to harsher predatory borrowing conditions (LeBaron, 2010). Furthermore, debt is a sign of “financialization of everyday life”, that is, the incorporation of low-income and middle class households into financial markets through borrowing (Van der Zwan, 2014, p. 117). As a consequence of increased reliance of capital accumulation on financialization rather than (over)production and consumption since the mid 1970s (Sweezy, 1997), finance has made inroads to the realm of everyday life at many levels (Van der Zwan, 2014). In this context, individuals and households are more integrated into the global financial system through the purchase of financial products protecting against the uncertainties of life, or the investment and management in financial assets bearing certain risks (ibid). More importantly, borrowing for immediate and projected social reproductive needs brings financialization and risk to ordinary lives, whether it is to afford basic needs such as accommodation (mortgage) or food and clothing (consumer credit) or for education (student loans) and pension plans, while debt repayment may actually jeopardize adequate day to day social reproductive activities by diverting funds from them (Karaagac, 2020). This chapter has thus discerned that Georgian families became increasingly reliant on debt during the expansion of global neoliberal capitalism into Georgia for their short-term and long-term social reproductive needs. Furthermore, they spent disproportionate amounts of remittance on debt repayment. In other words, participants in this study became cheap labourers in the bottom ranks of the global labour force, whose remittances further benefit global capital accumulation through overpriced debt repayments to private banks.

The next chapter examines the transnational space that the participants joined through their migration to Turkey as labourers following the dispossessions that they experienced. This transnational space is occupied by migrant women, their families, their

employers, as well as state and for-profit institutions that govern and shape women's migration, work and life experiences. Furthermore, this space contains material and ideological components, as well as social formations, which mirror the lengthy historical relationship between Georgia and Turkey. This history which revolves around the axes of neighbourliness, and animosity creates obstacles and opportunities for migrant women to navigate through. Hence, more details about the specific local manifestations of global capitalist social relations, as experienced by the participants, is presented.

**CHAPTER 4: FRIEND OR FOE? A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF GEORGIAN  
TURKISH RELATIONS**



A mileage sign at the outskirts of Tbilisi, Ankara is the capital of Turkey

*We are grateful that (Turkish) people opened their doors to the neighbours. They gave us jobs, money. (Anonymous participant, 11 December 2016, Istanbul)*

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, I provide an overview of historical and contemporary connections between Georgia and Turkey to shed light on participants' experiences in the transnational space spanning the two countries. According to Kasmir and Carbonella (2014) processes of dispossessions are lived and experienced differently in specific localities due to the historically specific ways these spaces were originally incorporated into the world capitalist order, while at the same time, a focus on "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey, 2003) "exposes heretofore hidden histories of connection among places and people" (p. 2). These statements speak to the importance of uncovering the specificities of Georgian-Turkish migration in light of their connections before, during and after the cold war which ended with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the inclusion of ex-Soviet states into the contemporary global neoliberal market place on uneven terms. Contemporary migrations and connections are further altered and gendered as Georgia's relationship with other countries, particularly with Russia, has been transforming. The historical political, economic, and social ties find articulation in the current regional political economy thus affecting Georgian migrant women's migration, and the organization, distribution and exploitation of their paid and unpaid social reproductive work.

In the previous chapter I discussed the extent and nature of dispossessions that participants experienced between 1991 and now. In this chapter, my focus extends

geographically and goes back further into the past. I draw from feminist political economy and my analysis through the concept of “conjunctures” (Hall, 1987) in order to provide insight to the contemporary migration of Georgian women to Turkey vis a vis the historical relationship between the two countries. The following section is a discussion of the concept of “conjuncture” (Hall, 1987) and its application to understanding migration under global capitalism. Next, I offer an abbreviated version of the centuries long interactions among the most prominent political forces of the region and their effects on human mobilities. I then explore the contemporary transnational space consisting of associations, organizations and networks, as well as their gender and class dimensions. This exploration shows that the niche that Georgian migrant women carved for themselves in this transnational space is partly shaped by the historical political economy in which past Empires of Ottoman, Russian and others, competed for resources causing migrations. The last two sections of this chapter review the current economic circumstances of the two modern nation states and regional visa policies which condition Georgian migrant women’s migration to Turkey. Participants’ transnational activities and connections discussed throughout these sections expose a contradiction: on the one hand, there are immutable close and positively framed connections between Turkish and Georgian populations, while on the other, a colossally antagonistic chronicle of events are not forgotten. Moreover, social formations, connections, as well as divisions that have been created across time manifest themselves, to a degree, in contemporary forms through their applications and re-interpretations in policies, as well as individual and collective identities. A detailed visual timeline of the two countries’ relations can be found in *Appendix D*.

## 4.2. CONJUNCTURAL ANALYSIS

In his essay titled “Gramsci and Us”, Stuart Hall (1987) calls the rise of the Right and Thatcherism in Great Britain a new historical conjuncture, just like the Russian Revolution in 1917 was called so by Gramsci. Drawing from Gramsci, Hall (1987) explains that a conjuncture is a moment which marks a no-return to the previous era, and the two eras are separated from each other because sets of forces came together leading to their own differentiated specific political, economic, social and cultural formations. Between two conjunctural moments, a period of time can be of any length, and is marked by a specific balance of contradicting social forces that can be explained by a larger picture of “conditions of existence” including ideologies and politics, in addition to economics (Hall & Massey 2010, p. 57). A conjunctural analysis thus aims to describe a “complex field of power and consent” by examining expressions at these determining levels of politics, economics and culture (ibid, p. 63). Flowing from this focus on specificities of conditions and eras, it is critical that generalizations from one period to the next and/or from one geography to another be circumstantial (Hall, 1987). This analytical lens is particularly valuable in tracing the local and regional articulations of global conditions (such as capitalism) while also accounting for divisions and agency under such conditions through the study of various facets of expression across different conditions of existence.

Gilbert (2019) suggests that as defined by Hall, analysing the conjuncture is key in comprehending and interpreting the present, although there are no immutable rules on the degree and scope of focus while tracing the specific articulations in political, economic, social, and cultural constituents of a particular conjunctural period. Therefore, the concept

of “conjuncture” has been adapted into various disciplines and subdisciplines. Predominantly used in Marxist cultural studies (see Gilbert, 2019), Hall himself mostly applied it for the interpretation of political culture or political sociology (see Hall et al. 1978; Hall, 1987). Via conjunctural analysis, feminists have provided a critical analysis of power relations between genders by assessing relations and representations of genders and gender norms in popular culture, media and art from historical, political and economic perspectives (see for example, Constance Penley on the representation of female body in *Star Trek* series, 1996; or see Catherine Hall on the exclusion of female accounts in political economic history of England, 1996).

Reflecting on neoliberal economic structuring and its differentiating effects on governments, populations, and mobilities, migration scholars have recently started to consider conjunctural analysis. In fact, Hall, Massey and Rustin (2013) note that conjunctural analysis is particularly suited to explain contemporary migrations: a) by providing a larger perspective where social divisions can be evaluated by, and b) by connecting the local to global. Likening contemporary migrations to the earlier creation of “free labourers” during the industrial revolution, they endorse that contemporary migrations are a result of “further commodifications of land and labour (p.14)”. In this context, they contend that the new (global) hierarchization of labour force consisting of these new free labourers could be evaluated through other salient social divisions which predate capitalism but which are reconfigured and articulated differently under the neoliberal conjuncture.

In migration scholarship, De Genova, Mezzadra & Pickles (2015) contend that the application of a conjunctural analysis would show the ways in which tensions,



contradictions and crises are negotiated within specific social formations such as migrations. In their article (2015), they show how public and political discourses and implementations shaped migrations to and from Europe in the past two decades. They argue that the problematic construction of migration as a “crisis” since early 2000s (p. 59) resulted in the formation of FRONTEX (the European border and customs management authority), and a discourse of “unprecedented demand” on administration and institutions. At the same time Europe and its close and far neighbour countries were feeling the effects of 2007-08 global financial crisis, and populations were turning to migration to mitigate its effects. De Genova, Mezzadra and Pickles (2015) argue that recent patterns of migration and the ways in which migrants respond to borders should be evaluated in relation to the conditioning effects of this neoliberal economic and right wing political conjuncture. In the same vein, Schiller (2018) discusses how the shifting visa regimes under neoliberal conjuncture have changed the migration and transnationalism patterns of migrants. She argues that transnational scholarship has undergone a prevalence of “timelessness and sense of unchanging mobility regimes” (p. 202) and suggests that this was a result of focus on spatiality at the expense of temporality. To correct this oversight would require widening the temporal lens to consider and entail the processes of historical and contemporary dispossessions and displacements. Hence, light would be shed on how and why certain migration streams formed at certain points in history.

Taking cue from this literature, in the following sections I offer a history of relations between Georgia and Turkey, as well as their predecessors. This historical analysis presents several conjunctures that translated into social divisions which found meaning around the conceptions of “neighbour” and “enemy”. I show that these

historically and culturally constructed conceptions are articulated in current visa regulations and current migrations. Through a conjunctural analysis I further demonstrate that historically shaped divisions around religion, gender, and class, as well as the nature and generation of migrations between the two populations, are reconstructed across the current transnational space and inform Georgian migrant women's transnational presence.

#### **4.3. HISTORY OF MIGRATIONS AND NATIONAL BORDERS**

*In 1650, the Ottoman came to Trabzon and Hopa by the Black Sea, that was the border then. They crossed it and stayed in Batum for 300 years. We used to be Christians all of us there. In Tblisi too. They told us to change religion. For example, my grand-father and grandmother were Muslims, because they had to be. After that, Russians came, and Turks left because of the war between Russia and Ottomans, in 1917. Then the border was set up and it was closed during the Soviet time. After Russia took Georgia over, there was oppression in regards to religion too. They did not like religion. They were Christians too so people did return to Christianity. Bolsheviks ruined all the churches but they left us as Christians. (...)*

*The Mensheviks, and Bolsheviks were really interested in us, because we were transit country between Russia and Europe. Before that we always had Arabs, Mongols etc. (dominating us) because we were small country we always needed protection. But Russians were the biggest. They had had 15 countries. (...) Then (following annexation) after 70 years or so, we've got our independence. Azerbaijan, Armenia, all separated. We really wanted the borders to open because we were very close neighbours (with Turkey). There were relatives on the both sides of the border, many relatives. (...) (Nermin and her husband, 6 June 2016, Istanbul)*

Nermin and her husband actually gave me a much longer lecture of history on Georgia's history and geopolitical significance. She was one of my first interviewees in the field, and at the time of our interview her husband was visiting from Georgia. Nermin took turns between telling me the historical account, translating her husband's own historical narrative and also serving tea. The above quote, however lengthy, is a synopsis of the changing social relations, structures, formations and human movements under complex and shifting political and economic power dynamics through conquests, wars, treaties, and alliances in the Caucasus region. Many other participants were knowledgeable and offered information on Turkish-Georgian and Georgian-Russian historical relations throughout my field work. My own research suggests a considerably longer and more diverse migration relationship between the two countries.

Georgia and Turkey are neighbouring countries at a crossroad between Asia and Europe. The transnational space between two current nation states of Georgia and Turkey has long been an area that witnessed the rise and death of several Empires, the exchange of populations and territories, mutable differing modes of production and political economies. It truly entails a history marked by "conjunctures" (Hall, 1987). The historical record points to invasions, captures, resistances, and shifting alliances where Anatolian and Caucasus populations lived side by side through war and peace.

Georgia, as Nimet pointed out, used to claim a small territory which did not spend significantly long periods of independence due to being squeezed among various regional superpowers over the centuries, including the Byzantine Empire, Imperial Russia, and the Ottoman and Persian/Qasar dynasties (King, 2008). King, in his book on Georgian history

(2008) reports that the Caucasus' inhabitancy record dates back to 12<sup>th</sup> Century BC. The indication is that there were several tribes and federations of tribes which were formed and ruled under complex state and oligarchic structures. It was the conquest of the Roman Empire (to evolve to Byzantine Empire later) around One BC which would eventually turn Georgia and its close neighbours (Armenia and Azerbaijan) into a battle ground between Persian, Arab and Roman Empires. In between these invasions there were bouts of independent kingdoms and one of the kings (Mirian III) declared Christianity as the state religion in 300 AD. The most powerful time of independent Georgia was during the tenth and eleventh centuries which ended with the Mongol invasion. As Georgia gained back its governmental and land sovereignty, the Byzantine Empire was terminated by the Ottoman Empire. From 1453 until 1722 when Georgians regained control and formed a Caucasian multinational state (Lang, 2019), the country was divided between the Ottoman and Persian rule. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the Ottoman and Persian Empires lose wars and power, while the Russian Empire became a more significant force in the area. The Russian Empire first recognized Georgia as an independent and sovereign state in 1783 (Lang, 2019) but slowly started annexing territory until 1877 when the final parts were taken from the Ottoman by Russian forces. By 1921 the Red Army had annexed the whole of Georgia to the Soviet Union, a move spearheaded by Stalin, who was a Georgian by birth (Lang, 2019).

The historical and transnational connections between Turkey and Georgia are denoted by significant political and economic ruptures which altered borders and border regimes and shaped migrations. As shown by Wolf (1997), since as early as the 1400s, across the Eastern and Western continents, populations existed with various social and

trading interconnections. States expanded and incorporated neighbouring populations in their political structures through conquests or kinship relations. Elite groups, succeeding one another, seized control of agricultural populations and established new political and symbolic orders in conjunction with changing modes of production in pursuit of surplus labour and products. New global and regional divisions of labour, and consequently ethnic divisions of labour, were established. Furthermore, populations have been moved through conquests, in an effort to organize production and to secure redistribution of surplus resources and populations. Perhaps the most obvious case was slavery, which was practiced by conquering states around the world, and which ended not before reaching drastic proportions. It was not only local, conquered populations which were forcefully moved or subjugated. Populations of victorious empires regularly relocated to conquered territories. For instance, when the Roman Empire invaded Anatolia and eastward geographies, Wolf (1997) reports that South-European populations made their way to Syria, Iran, Babylon, and Egypt, turning the area into the granary of Rome (p. 102). A historical perspective thus is necessary in order to contextualize new labour migrations because it sheds light on the processual ways in which societies and class structures unfold under the changing interplay of forces (p.387).

Caucasian peoples were more or less free travelers across the region until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when borders started to solidify between the Ottoman and Russian Empires with border controlling soldiers, peace agreements between high powers and modern mapping processes (King, 2008). This era was finalized in 1921, when the USSR occupied Georgia as one of its republics and closed down the Turkish border. Until then, cross-border population movement had been quite a common occurrence in Eurasia, in

various forms, among which the most prominent were for the purposes of commerce, missionary/pilgrimage, conquest, and kidnapping/slavery. Georgian merchants and entrepreneurs lived and conducted commerce in the Byzantine (395 AD-1453 AD) and Ottoman (1299-1923) times. Thus Georgians became one of the other ethnic colonies like Venetians, Genovese or Russians in Istanbul, who traded in arts and commerce. Because of Istanbul's special place in Christianity, many Christian scholars and priests had been trained and worked in Istanbul, among them being both Catholic and Orthodox Georgians. The Georgian Catholic church, for example, was erected in 1861 in Istanbul. It then evolved to include an educational institution, library and press (Kucuk, 2016). Another historical hall called Aya Pantaleymon was used by Orthodox Georgian pilgrims and clergy for centuries until the closure of border between the USSR and Turkey.

In addition to regular and perpetual movements between Turkey and Georgia there were a few distinct waves of migration. After Georgia and the Caucasus fell under the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire (16<sup>th</sup> century), many Georgians who had converted to Islam migrated to various parts of the Ottoman Black Sea coast. They founded villages around Trabzon and Samsun, but concentrated mostly in the Izmit-Adapazari and Istanbul areas (D'allesio, 1921) (see the map in *Appendix A*). There were also other Muslim Georgian groups who migrated westward (around Samsun) from Georgia shortly after the 1877-78 Turko-Russian war (Izmetzade, 1893). During the Bolshevik revolution (1917), many Russian and Georgian Mensheviks escaped to Turkey. These political migrants mostly took refuge in the Marmara region, around cities like Adapazari.

D'allesio (1921) reports the number of Georgians, or individuals of Georgian origin, to be around 300 to 400 thousand in Anatolia in the early 1900s. Most Georgians who were already in Turkey chose not to return to Georgia after Georgia had been annexed by the Soviets (Kucuk, 2016). In addition, there was a large Georgian ethnic group that lived on the South-East coast of the Black Sea, where it is now known as Artvin and Batum (border cities between Georgia and Turkey). Families living in these border cities were separated when the borders closed in 1921. Throughout the four centuries of migrations Georgian ethnic organizations, geared for solidarity and support, and for keeping the Georgian language and traditions alive among the people of Georgian origin in Istanbul and across Anatolia had been formed (D'allesio, 1921).

#### **4.4. CONTEMPORARY MIGRATIONS AND TRANSNATIONAL SPACE**

*If we threw a stone in Tbilisi it would hit a Turkish man, if we threw a stone in Istanbul it would hit a Georgian woman (Nilay, 22 August 2016, Tbilisi)*

The sealing of borders in 1921 was another conjuncture. On the one hand it marked the start of a transnational space in the sense that there were now two nation states, on the other hand it stopped free, or forced movement of populations and goods. Moreover, concurrently, the two nation states embarked in two opposite, and even opposing, political economies. The young republic of Turkey followed modernization and industrialization based on state-centered import substitution policies until the Military coup in 1980 (Ozcan & Turunc, 2011), while Georgia, under Soviet tutelage, followed a Socialist form of modernization and industrialization. During the cold war, Georgia was a front line between the Soviets and West as a member of the USSR.

The Georgia-Turkish border reopened with the Georgian declaration of independence in 1991. Currently, Turkey and Georgia share a border of 252 km. with three land-crossing points and daily bus and plane services. In 2017, approximately two and a half million Georgian nationals visited Turkey, representing an increase of more than tenfold since 2002 (from 161,375 in 2002 to 2,438,730 in 2017) (Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2018). Georgians received a total of 7,627 work visas, only second to Syrians in number and among them 6500 were women (Ministry of Family, Labour, and Social Services, 2016, p. 125). In general, however, the number of crossings, work visas and visitor visas do not accurately capture the number of migrant women in Turkey as Georgians and Turkish nationals cross borders for daily trips and/or overstay their visa, or switch between visa statuses. Visa regulations in relation to Georgian migrants in Turkey will be further explored in the next section.

Today, according to the Georgian Migration Commission, there are 32 Georgian diaspora organizations in Turkey (State Commission on Migration Issues, 2015) though the list is not exhaustive and contains mainly those who tend to be more active and/or willing to cooperate with the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Diaspora Issues. My own research shows that the above-mentioned historical migrant groups had their own ethnic associations which were mostly interested in keeping the history and culture, that is, Georgian language and traditions. These associations predominantly operate from Istanbul, although smaller organizations can be found in the villages of original Georgian settlement. One prominent association I contacted in Istanbul has a library which mostly contains literature on the history of Georgians during Ottoman and Turkish Republic times. They put together events on religious (Easter), cultural and artistic occasions (like concert nights), hold Georgian language classes, and are proud to have launched Georgian



as an elective course in the Turkish curriculum geared for grade four to eight pupils in 2014. A bilingual magazine titled *Pirosmani* had been published between the years of 2007 and 2010, with a focus on highlighting individuals of Georgian origin in historical and contemporary Turkish literature, art and quotidian life.

Upon contacting a couple of these organizations, browsing *chveneburi.net* (“the first Georgian website of Turkey” as it is called) and as a result of conversations with migrant women, the disconnection between Georgian migrant women and diaspora organizations became clear. None of the migrant women whom I spoke with actually ever contacted a diaspora organization even if they may have heard of them. Similarly, diaspora organizations have no contacts with migrant women, nor any programs geared to their needs or interests. More surprising was the lack of involvement on the part of Orthodox Churches in Georgian migrant women’s lives in terms of the daily practicalities of their employment or transnational engagements. It is well documented in the literature that religious organizations and churches can play important an important role in the migration and settlement experiences of migrants (Mahler & Pessar, 2006). Levitt (2004), for example, in her study on migrants in the United States of America (the US) of diverse religious background, shows how Catholic Churches around the world help migrants move between sending and receiving country parishes. Such Catholic Churches in the US explicitly took part in integrating migrants into powerful established networks where they could express interest, gain skills and make claims through political/civic engagement with respect to their home and host countries. Furthermore, the Church and its doctrine offered explanations and gave meaning to migration and settlement experiences by explaining a “religiously defined” world where migrants situated themselves (Levitt,

2004, p. 15). Another important study which demonstrates the importance of local churches was conducted by Danis (2007) in Istanbul. In this study, Danis (2007) found that the religious leaders of Orthodox churches acted as intermediaries between Syriac Orthodox families and Christian Iraqi migrant families. Christian Iraqi women, usually single daughters of families, thus found themselves in a niche within the domestic work labour market in Istanbul where they were only hired by Syriac Orthodox families (Danis, 2007).

Before I traveled to Georgia for fieldwork I was aware that there were many Turkish nationals who crossed to Batumi for shopping (particularly by car), holidaying, and business. But it is in the streets of Tbilisi, 375 kilometers away from Batumi, that I became aware of a larger Turkish presence in Georgia. I was approached by many Turks - upon hearing that I spoke Turkish - on the streets asking for directions or information. The presence of Turkish banks, restaurants, businesses - particularly Real Estate- and Turkish firms involved in the many construction projects that were underway in Tbilisi were salient. Although my attempts to interview members of GURTIAD (Gurcu ve Turk Isadamlari Dernegi, Georgian-Turkish Businessmen Association) were unsuccessful, I spent time conversing with Turkish students, Turkish waiters and Georgian individuals who previously had worked in Turkey, as well as professors whose speciality was either Turkish language, literature or history. The Turkish population in Georgia is indeed noteworthy. According to the State Commission on Migration Issues of Georgia (2015), between 2010-14, Turkish citizens were consistently amongst the top five countries across various migrant categories living in Georgia. Turkey was the second top country whose nationals were naturalized as Georgian nationals (second to Russia, with a total of

3,033 individuals, SCMI, 2015, p. 23), and the top third country in the number of foreign students in Georgia (1,310 students), following Azerbaijan and India. In the same period, Turkish nationals ranked second among those who received work residence permit (a total of 4,618, p. 25), following China and ranked fourth from top as “illegal foreigners” present in Georgia (ibid). Furthermore, Turkish citizens have been establishing a presence through government and non-government Organizations. These organizations arrange festivals, and provide for the funding of Georgian students/scholars to be trained in Turkey as well as for research centers and charities (Celik, 2016). Business activities and investment by Turkish individuals and companies have also been prominent as they were noted as standing second to Iranians among nationalities who registered for-profit and non-profit business enterprises (National Agency of Public Registry, 2017). GURTIAD, (Gurcu ve Turk Isadamlari Dernegi, Georgian-Turkish Businessmen Association) for example, which was founded in 1999 has Turkish members from sectors like finance, service, logistics, manufacturing etc., and is reported to be committed to protect and promote their interests in Georgia (Gurtiad, 2017).

My research indicates that the current Turkish-Georgian transnational space consists of three parallel but distinct social fields, with not much overlap between them. Here, the terms “transnational space”, or “transnational social fields” are conceptually based on Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton’s (1999, p 1) conceptualization of transnationalism. According to these scholars, transnational social fields emerge out of processes by which (im)migrants link their country of origin and their country of settlement. Transnational spaces thus consist of various types of ties, ranging from family to organizational, political and economic, and are developed and maintained across

geographical and cultural borders (ibid). The first transnational field I determined between Georgia and Turkey is maintained by the migrant organizations which were founded and preserved by earlier generations of Georgian migrants in Turkey. This population and their organizations are interested in maintaining a cultural presence in contemporary Turkey by highlighting their accomplishments in Ottoman/Turkish history while actively avoiding interaction with newcomers from Georgia. Turkish businesses and contemporary cultural organizations which operate in Georgia as outlined above maintain a second social field. This transnational social field is a result of Turkish companies' profit seeking business ventures in construction, service and tourism in the ex-Soviet countries after the latter opened to global capitalist market (Celik, 2016). The third social field is formed by Georgian migrant women, who are also on the move because of global capitalism not as profit accumulators, but as "free labourers" (see previous chapter). Georgian migrant women's transnational field consisted of their friends and job connections, legal and illegal employment offices, money and cargo transfer firms, bus companies, and their and their employers' families. The disconnect between these three transnational fields could be evaluated in light of the fact that transnational spaces are where class, gender and political cleavages of communities are reflected. In this context, transnational and local experiences, identity formation of migrants have been found to be contingent upon their (shifting) social locations (Tastsoglou, 2006). Tastsoglou (2006) explains that transnational spaces expand across several nation states -whether "imagined or encountered" (p. 202)- and are multi-layered with the inclusion of non-migrant populations. Migrants' social locations in the host country (such as minority status) are as important as their social locations in the country of origin, which altogether translate into dynamic constructions of intersectional

identities, and associated transnational practices (Tastsoglou, 2006). Literature on migrant transnational also activities support this claim. In one of the earlier studies, Goldring (2001) examined gender differences exhibited by Mexican migrants in the United States of America. She showed that within the Mexican state-mediated transnational spaces, home town associations were the forum where men practiced forms of citizenship that enhanced their social and gender status and women were absent from positions of power reflecting traditional (Mexican) female roles. In tandem, Mexican women were more active in American local settlement and non-settlement related organizations such as Parent-Teacher Associations. In another study which teased out class and generational differences in transnational engagement of British migrants living in Paris, Scott (2006) distinguished six types of highly skilled –and middle class – associations that British people were involved in. British migrants organized around different interests in relation to their “motive for migration”, “commitment to host country”, and “family status” (p. 1111). Their identities which were shaped under historical, emerging and changing new national (British) and transnational class structures influenced the distinctive socialization patterns among them. Accordingly, these six groups of migrants mostly lived in different neighbourhoods and socialized in different circles. Furthermore, the organizational patterns of their associations and community organizations were diverse and did not seek other British migrant organizations’ input. For instance, British expatriates who lived in Paris for longer periods of time established an institutional framework where a collective identity rooted in British identity could be celebrated and maintained. Such organizations carried names such as “the British and Commonwealth Women’s Club” or “the British Colony Committee” and were geared to keep transnational ties with Britain as well. In contrast, newcomer expatriates were

involved more with multinational professional associations and informal networks rather than the above mentioned British “institutional” community associations.

Class based differences in transnational identity formation as well as migrant association participation and agendas were examined in detail by Colic-Peisker (2008) in her research on Croatian migrants in Australia. In this detailed study, Colic-Peisker (2008) determined that there were two cohorts of Croatian migrants in Australia. The first cohort consisted of working class Croatians who were raised and lived in Yugoslavia, and who had migrated to Australia between 1950 and 1970s. The second wave were professional, middle class migrants who grew up and were educated in Independent Croatia. These groups differed in terms of their involvement and expectations from their migration and transnational experiences in that the first cohort’s associations were influenced by their intense emotional connection to the homeland. Flowing from this, this group formed clubs across political divisions yet all clubs pursued an ethnic identity consisting of rural, community based, and religious (Catholic) affiliations. The clubs served as a celebration of this identity which isolated them in Australia and also were geared to help the homeland. In contrast, the second cohort which consisted of urban professionals, never attended Croatian clubs, associations, or churches. Although they acknowledged a Croatian identity, their aim was to succeed in professional and cosmopolitan integration to the Australian way of life. Therefore, they rejected the rural cultural elements which were still prevalent in the public representation of the Croatian community in Australia, they avoided living in the same neighbourhoods as the older cohort while at the same time not taking any part in (trans)nationalist political or social actions (Colic-Peisker, 2008).

In the transnational space between Turkey and Georgia, class, gender and generational differences were highly noticeable. I also wanted to determine whether participants had relatives from earlier migrations to Turkey. Although most participants acknowledged that there were broken families as a result of Cold War border closures, only one had such family members that she contacted after Georgia's independence. In addition, at the time of my interviews, three migrant women had worked for families who had Georgian roots, that is, families from earlier cohorts. In contrast, all migrant women had current (Georgian) relatives, neighbours and/or close friends who worked in Turkey at one point in the past twenty years. Tumay's words capture the close connections among Georgian relatives and friends who preferred to work in Turkey:

I came to Turkey ten years ago, to Sapanca. My husband's uncle's daughter used to work in Sapanca. She had been there for years. I took the bus from Kutaisi, and the cousin received me in Sapanca. She took me home (her employer's home). Then she found me my job through her connections. I took care of (a well-known Turkish actor's) grandmother for about three months. You know, those days we used to go back every three months. I went home, and after three days they called me saying that she passed away. She was 97 years old, she could speak a bit of Georgian. I was just taking care of her, changing, cleaning, feeding her. I just stayed with her, we used to look out the window. I used to sing for her, the Georgian "nana" song, and she used to cry. She was 97 years old, but she still remembered... (Tumay, 15 January 2017, Istanbul)

Georgian migrant women in this study are part of a Turkish Georgian transnational space where various migrant groups established and sustained transnational relationships over the past several centuries, following several conjunctures. The literature delineates that

migrant groups and associations reflect and respond to conjunctures which consist of political, economic and social processes, on local and transnational scales. Geographical, historical, political and legal practices in home and host countries further determine their formation and objectives. Moreover, these groups occupy altered class positions in both countries, which are also compounded by differentiating factors of gender, migration status, race and ethnicity. As such, the contemporary transnational space between Georgia and Turkey is divided along the lines of gender, class, and generation. Earlier Georgian migrant cohorts who settled in Turkey during the Ottoman Empire had different political, cultural and socio-economic agendas, which with time, changed articulation vis a vis the contemporary Turkish Republic, and the Socialist State of Georgia and Independent Georgia. Again, the new business elite's political, cultural and socio-economic schedule does not draw from earlier cohorts' objectives, but rather is informed by global capitalism's accumulation goals.

Georgian migrant women are in this space on their own terms, relying on their networks consisting of friends, family, and employers, and transnational and local businesses which are geared to their specific needs of ensuring the transfer of remittances from the migrant women to their families. Migrant women in this study viewed their migration as a temporary affair; they were not concerned about bringing their families to Turkey. Relatedly, they did not need to showcase or continue their cultural heritage. My conversations with them, in general, indicated a lack of interest, or hope, in Georgia's politics, which eliminated the formation of any diasporic or political organization by them. None of them knew that they could vote at the Georgian Consulate in Istanbul during elections, nor were they aware of any outreach programs of their government (see



more details on diaspora outreach programs below). As an all-women group who worked in a low-class and demeaned job, they did not exactly reflect what the previous cohorts and contemporary corporate bosses would like to establish through ties or indeed, incorporate into a Georgian image. Overall then, Georgian migrant women in Turkey are marginalized, not only in national and international labour markets but also in the particular transnational space they inhabit between Turkey and Georgia.

#### **4.5. CURRENT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

Both Turkey and Georgia have joined the global free market economy; Turkey on the heels of a military coup (1980) and Georgia after independence from the Soviet Union (1991). The set of “reforms” following International Monetary Fund prescriptions which brought about export-led economic growth policies and subsequent liberalization and privatization in Turkey, and the relentless dispossessions which affected various heterogeneous groups before and after Rose revolution (2003) in Georgia (outlined in the previous chapter), led to new class structures in both countries.

Being the 17<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world and a member of the G20, Turkey is considered to be an upper-middle-income country (World Bank, 2018a). The growth rate has been six point three percent per year on average while the per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) nearly tripled (close to US\$ 11,000) between the years 2010-2017 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017). In 2016, the service sector constituted approximately 65 percent of the economy, followed by industry (27 percent) and agriculture (eight percent) (The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey, 2018). In 2017, men’s labour force participation was 72 percent whereas women’s was 32 percent,

although the latter rate reached 71.3 percent for women who held university or higher degrees (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2018). Women with higher education participate more in the Turkish labour market, because social stigmas attached to working women in their circles are lower and there is lower wage gap in vocations requiring higher education. Women with lower education levels, on the other hand, tend to gravitate to informal sectors (such as cleaning houses) or abide more by the general view that women's main roles are to be wives and mothers (Erinc, 2017). Turkish middle-class women have been participating in the labour market in increasing numbers and engaging in activities as part of the changing middle and upper middle-class expectations, such as taking their children to extracurricular activities or adhering to fashion standards by frequenting beauty parlors (Ozyegin, 2001). Consequently, time spent on domestic and care activities has been decreasing without altering some of the old notions around mothering and housekeeping (ibid).

These findings are more or less in line with what has been reported in the literature which shows that the outsourcing of (women's) social reproductive labour is a familiar trend happening in industrialized countries. As discussed in detail in *chapter two*, currently, the main causes of such outsourcing are decreasing social state provisions, the increased participation of women in labour markets and the rigid sexual division of labour (Kofman, 2014) which altogether exert an increased demand on women's social reproductive labour. Modern outsourcing patterns are further shaped by historically intersecting race and gender dimensions which are currently further nuanced in migration patterns and policies. Since the 1990s Turkey saw the emergence of a two-tiered domestic labour market which followed the expansion of "the migrant domestic workers market"

and the reorganization of domestic work (Akalin, 2009). A historical account of outsourcing social reproductive labour to domestic labourers in Turkey, and its contemporary articulation in Georgian migrant women's position in Turkish homes and labour markets will be further discussed in *chapter six*.

On the other hand, unemployment and imminent large-scale poverty mark the modern Georgian economy. Between the years of 2012-2017 the average real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth was three point eight percent (The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017). Unemployment rate in Georgia is reported to be 22 percent in urban and five percent in rural areas, and the labour market is marked with mismatch between market demand and skills (*ibid*). Geostat statistics (2016) indicate that, in general, labour force participation rate is higher among men than women. The proportion of the population under the national minimum income standard is 24.8 percent. Although the share of agriculture in the country's GDP has been declining due to an aging infrastructure, wars and the Russian embargo, it still represents nine percent of the total GDP and more than 50 percent of the population's livelihood depends on agriculture. Trade, currently holds the highest share in economy (18.7 percent) followed by industry (17 percent), transport and communication, and construction each sharing about ten percent. Among them hotel and restaurant businesses, mining and quarrying, construction, wholesale and retail trade, as well as financial intermediation seeing the highest growth rates (Geostat, 2016).

In the meantime, emigration rates have stayed at approximately 26 percent since 2000 and the population of Georgia fell 15 percent between the 2002 and 2014 censuses to 3.71 million (Geostat, 2016). Emigrants are recorded to be overwhelmingly of working age, and 55 percent of them are women (Geostat, 2016). Most live in Russia (22 percent), followed by Greece (15 percent), Turkey (11 percent) and Italy (11 percent) (Geostat, 2016). About 30 percent of Georgian households have emigrant mothers, while 32.3 percent have emigrant fathers (Iashvili, von Reichert, & Gvenetadze, 2016). Georgian nationals with higher education are up to four times more likely to emigrate to a high-income country while those with lower levels of education choose Greece and Turkey (Dermendzhieva, 2011). Significantly more women emigrants choose to go to Greece, Turkey and Italy, while men's prime choices of destination are Russia and the Ukraine (Georgia State Commission on Migration Issues, 2017, p. 14). In Turkey, Georgian women work predominantly as domestic workers, and Georgian men are found in seasonal work on tea and hazelnut plantations, in factories, in construction and privately-owned workshops (Dermendzhieva, 2011). Accordingly, the importance of remittances has been increasing both for families who remained in Georgia and the Georgian economy. More specifically, remittances increased more than 500 percent between 2004 and 2014 (OECD, 2017). In 2015 remittances totalled 1,794 million USD and constituted ten percent of the country's national income (World Bank, 2018b).

#### **4.6. GENDERED EMIGRATION FROM GEORGIA AND VISA POLICIES**

*Q: Why did you not go to Italy, your daughter is there after all?:*

*Ester: she kept calling me, but I did not go. Look, she has not come back from Italy for five years. Look at me, I go back whenever I want. Now she is thinking of returning to Georgia, and then coming to Turkey. Georgia and Turkey are neighbours, we come and go. (Ester, 7 August 2016, Istanbul)*

Women's emigration in increasing numbers since Georgia's independence stems from continuous dispossessions which are further compounded by rising hostilities between Georgia and Russia. The previous chapter has outlined the twin effect of Russia's embargoes and the curtailment of visa-free travel arrangement of Georgians to Russia.

Turkey, on the other hand, has been offering Georgian citizens a changing but rather relaxed visa regime when compared to other countries. Moldovans for instance, until 2019 could only stay one month in Turkey on a tourist visa for which they had to pay (see Kaska, 2006 on the rhythms of Moldovan women's stays in Turkey at that time). My conversations with migrant women indicated that Azerbaijani and Armenian women can only stay in Turkey for a month without a visa. In fact, Bloch (2017) reports that some women from ex-Soviet countries who have been travelling to Turkey since early 1990s for work or shuttle trade often opt to arrange "fake" or "real love" marriages to resolve the short visa issue. In 2012 Turkey started new visa regulations with Georgia (Directorate General of Migration, 2018). Until then, Georgian nationals could enter Turkey without a visa and stay three months provided that they left Turkey for a short period of time after the completion of three months. Since 2012, Georgians can still enter

Turkey without a visa for three months but this has to be followed by a three months' absence, in other words 90 days over 180 days –a policy which is influenced by and favoured in visa negotiations between the European Union and its periphery countries. At the same time new visa categories have been established in Turkey, such as a visitor visa and a work visa (Directorate General of Migration, 2018). In the former, citizens of other countries can stay in Turkey for one year provided that they have an address to show and they pay for private health insurance. Work visas, on the other hand, require signing of a contract with an employer. They have to be renewed every one or two years and the employers have to pay for monthly social insurance fees.

In light of increasing remittances and diversified migration destinations, successive Georgian governments have taken action to control emigration and return conditions. In October 2010, the government of Georgia created the State Commission on Migration Issues (SCMI) which approved a migration strategy with an action plan to support it in 2012. With the assistance of the European Union Mobility Partnership and within the visa liberalisation Action Plan of the European Union (Visa Liberalisation Program) the State Commission on Migration Issues drafted two “Migration Strategies of Georgia” (SCMI, 2015). Their aim was to achieve security and stability, an approximation of national legislation with that of the European Union as well as better management of migration in order to advance economic and social development of the country (SCSMI, 2015). Among eight thematic directions found in the latest strategy there are explicit deliberations of how to improve the registration of emigrants, as well as to enhance diaspora engagement, the latter especially by bringing language and blood ties to the forefront. Another aim is to promote the internationalisation of the education sector to increase the acceptability of Georgian credentials by employers abroad. At the same

time, Ministries involved with the management of emigration finalized a new EU regime following a five-year dialogue with the European Union. As a result, a visa-free travel programme came into effect in March of 2017, and was celebrated by concerts and festivities both in Tbilisi and Brussels (European External Action Service, 2017). The new European Union Visa regime allows Georgian nationals holding biometric passports to enter the Schengen zone for short stays; 90 days out of any 180-day period- without needing a visa, as a tourist, to visit friends or family, to attend cultural or sports events, for business meetings, medical treatment, journalistic or media purposes, and for short term studies or training activities (European External Action Service, 2017). All these undertakings reflect an emphasis on circular migration, repatriation, and tapping into diaspora resources under the nationalistic tones set by the Georgian State. A growing emphasis on the latter can be ascertained through an increasingly concerted effort of the Georgian State to reach out to diaspora organizations through standardized publications such as lists of diaspora organizations, or textbooks specifically developed for Georgian Sunday schools and Georgian language courses. Another program that was implemented titled “Become a Young Ambassador of Your Country” awarded travel scholarships to fifteen young Georgian emigrants across European countries, and Turkey and Israel, for a year to “raise awareness about Georgia” (p. 97). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia hosted 120 diaspora representatives from 25 countries for an event entitled “Strong Diaspora for United Georgia Day” where the Minister appealed to the diaspora leaders to “come together (...) (for) the consolidation of the nation, and our involvement and support” (Zalkaliani, 2019).

## 4.7. CONCLUSION

Georgia and Turkey are neighbouring countries. This neighbourship is raised on a shared history of coexistence fraught with antagonisms and alliances. Numerous momentous conjunctures over the past centuries have shaped political, economic and social systems and exchanges, and consequently the migrations, identities, cultures and networks between populations. Utilizing the concept of conjuncture (Hall, 1987) this chapter has shown a historically constructed transnational space between Georgia and Turkey and divisions vis a vis borders, religion, culture, gender and generation. The latest waves of human movements between Georgia and Turkey have formed under contemporary capitalism and visa regimes which facilitate neoliberal capital accumulation. On the other hand, structures and policies in this transnational space also reflect a degree of historical acknowledgement. This is found in favourable visa conditions for Georgians on the part of Turkey, and transnational and local networks which include and exclude groups differentially in a historically informed manner. Ultimately, this chapter has shed light on the contemporary migration and transnational positions of Georgian migrant women which are shaped under the demands of contemporary capital but which are also cast and interpreted in reference to a powerful past. Historically based definitions of being neighbours and being enemies are reflected in participants' choices, decisions, family relations, work and public experiences, in short, all aspects surrounding and shaping the expansion of their paid and unpaid labour power.

The last chapter laid out the specific conditions under which Georgian population joined the global capitalist order, while this chapter provided the specific historical context upon which Georgian migrant women's migration emerged. The next two chapters are developed on the ramifications of findings presented in these two chapters by



refocusing on the key analytical point of social reproduction theory: the increasing tension between the needs of contemporary capitalist accumulation and social reproduction relations and its incompatible demands on women's paid and unpaid labour. As mentioned earlier, social reproduction consists of multifaceted and multiscale processes which mainly rest on women's unpaid and/or devalorized labour which serves to keep social reproduction costs low. In fact, the devalorization of women's labour in the reproduction and maintenance of a cheap labour force is determined to be one of the earliest and continuous dispossessions (Mies, 1986) and it can be traced to the inception and organization of gendered division of labour. The next chapter examines the maintenance and reproduction of mechanisms through which women's labour is devalorized in Georgia, especially when they also have to take on waged employment in the global capitalist labour market under the current conjuncture. It centers on one aspect of global restructuring of social reproduction: the increasing transnationalization and reorganization of social reproduction relations within families and their consequences.

**CHAPTER 5**

**TRANSNATIONAL IN-LAWS: UNDERSTANDING WOMEN'S  
POSITIONS IN GEORGIAN FAMILY STRUCTURE**



This 20-meter statue, which towers Tbilisi, was erected in 1958. Kartlis Deda, or ‘Mother of Georgia’, wears Georgian national dress and holds a glass of wine for visitors, signifying hospitality for guests on one hand. On her other hand is a sword, signifying love of freedom and resistance against the intruders.

## 5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter centres on the tensions which arise from the contradictory demands of capital and its social reproduction needs on women's unpaid social reproductive labour. It does so by tracing migrant women's positions as a function of time and space vis-à-vis Georgian patri-local family configuration. The previous two chapters outlined the historical and macrostructural factors behind Georgian women's migration. While *chapter three* discussed the aftermath of a dissolved socialist production system and newly introduced capitalism in Georgia, *chapter four* dwelled on the chronology of migrations and transnational space in the context of political, economic and social ties between Georgia and Turkey. These processes can be characterized by the establishment of a new national social reproduction mandate in Georgia where gradual privatization led to the seeking of additional wages, and increased borrowing to compensate for the withdrawal of social welfare benefits. As a consequence of new political, economic and social requirements new livelihood practices have developed in a transnational space which witnessed the re-institution of historical ties.

This chapter shifts attention back to social reproduction relations and refocuses the analytical lens to the ideological and material underpinnings of production and social reproduction relations. It delineates the articulations of global and regional material relations in the most intimate, daily and life-long gender and family interactions by exploring the (re)configurations of Georgian migrant women's social reproductive activities toward their families on a transnational scale and the meanings assigned to this work. To this end, gender norms which define Georgian women's position in their

families and communities as women, mothers and in-laws are explored. Migrant women reinterpret and reshape these identities and roles transnationally to alleviate the superfluous demands on their unpaid social reproductive labour.

The chapter is based on the key premises advanced by social reproduction theory in relation to the devalorization of women's labour, which originates in gendered division of labour and which critically contributes to the capitalist accumulation. As elaborated in *chapter two*, social reproduction theory conceptualizes social reproduction as threefold: 1. Physical reproduction of the labour force through giving birth, 2. Daily reproduction of the labour force via domestic labour processes such as cooking, cleaning and caring, and 3. Reproduction of the social structures which maintain (unequal) material and social relations, in short, under capitalism, these are class relations. Women's paid and unpaid labour, because of its devalorized stature in society and labour markets, is central to all three levels of social reproduction and ultimately helps to reproduce a cheap and differentiated labour force. The devalorization is brought about and maintained through the disassociation of such labour from the attributes of "productive" labour. In this context, family, kinship and gender relations and associated ideologies are of decisive influence, as much as local and global material inequalities are, in maintaining the gendered division of labour, the distribution of labour power, and the appropriation of surplus value from women.

Furthermore, studies into transnational families suggest that the reshaping and redefining of family and kinship roles reflects the changing parameters of social reproduction relations under a changing global political economy. The vast literature on migrant women, which I will review in the next two sections, highlights women's

extended social reproductive roles but falls short of conceptualizing migrant women's agency within the context of constricting family and kinship structures and ideologies which inform and sustain the local, regional and global capitalist and social reproduction relations. Moreover, this scholarship emphasizes the transfer of surplus labour from poorer women and their families to wealthier women and their families, but does so only in relation to a singular present, that is, by excluding temporal dimension. In this context, I build on and extend this literature by attempting to answer a two-pronged question: 1. How do the particulars and the extent of local and regional ideologies which inform migrant women's positions vis-à-vis families transform and manifest in the transnational space, and 2. How are these ideologies recalibrated and reproduced, and in turn maintain the gendered division of labour locally, regionally and globally. In answering these questions, I also problematize social reproduction as a function of time in that I examine women's positions and their reproduction with reference to past, present, and future. Specifically, I focus on how Georgian migrant women negotiate the tensions exerted by changing capitalist relations on their unpaid social reproductive labour by reconfiguring, reconstructing and reinterpreting ideologies related to being a Georgian woman, as well as reshaping their identities and their social reproductive work across a transnational space. I maintain that Georgian migrant women's transnational unpaid social reproductive labour sustains a cheap labour force in Georgia. In addition, it reproduces and reinforces the structures through which devalorized reproductive work is attained now and in the future, ensuring the appropriation of surplus value for capitalist accumulation.

Building on the premises put forward by the social reproduction theory and aiming to fill a gap in the literature with regards to women's migration and their role in the multiple dimensions of social reproduction, this chapter seeks to unravel the local

ideological and material contexts in which Georgian women's social reproductive labour is devalorized and how this labour is deployed for the daily and generational reproduction of Georgian families. It shows the manifestations, challenges, and changes that these ideological and material circumstances evince once they are applied in the transnational space between Georgia and Turkey. The first two sections outline the key points in the literature regarding women's migration. I examine the various cultural views surrounding women's migration and its consequences for families and communities, and I compare them to those surrounding Georgian migrant women's experiences.

The following section focuses on Georgian migrant women's positions and identities in relation to Georgian family and societal structures, that is, the institution of gendered division of labour, and the gathering and allocation of resources within patrilocal and multigenerational families. This analysis takes into consideration the historical (Soviet) and contemporary government policies in overseeing the generation and allocation of societal gendered division of labour, the institutions of the national social reproduction system, and the management of kinship and family structures. I then examine the key position of the constructs of womanhood, manhood, motherhood and "in-law-hood" locally, and their implication for women's migration at the individual, familial and societal levels. The rest of the chapter examines the patterns of how daily and generational social reproductive activities, such as household chores and caring, childcare, and budgeting practices expected of women are redistributed, redefined and reshaped once Georgian women become migrants and their social reproductive work scales up and unfolds in the transnational space. Staying in touch with their families through travel, remittances and on the internet are central to the social reproductive work of Georgian migrant women, especially if they have children in Georgia. Through this

labour migrant women try to reiterate their position in their families and communities as virtuous women and good mother(in-law)s. Included in this examination are the efforts expanded by migrant women to keep several critical components of womanhood, kinship and family ideologies intact while challenging and redefining the construct of being a migrant woman in Turkey to fall in line with the existing gender norms. On this topic, I also problematize these implications in relation to the unique transnational space between Turkey and Georgia, which, in addition to being subject to national and international governing agencies, is ridden with gendered ideologies which stem from historical connections.

This chapter, then, shows the reproduction of the mechanisms of devalorization of Georgian women's social reproductive labour. Georgian women's social reproduction activities take place and find meaning in family, kinship, gender and national relations and ideologies, which are dynamically and continually transforming, at variance and in response to capitalism's demands and women's own engagements. All things considered, this chapter contends that although Georgian migrant women may first challenge some cultural norms surrounding their positions in their families and communities, through their continuous efforts over the transnational space they reframe their migration and roles to safeguard their current and future positions in their families.

## **5.2. WOMEN'S MIGRATION**

*As soon as I go there (to Georgia) we pick up a fight. Because you get used to living alone, thinking alone, all in your own mind. But then he (the husband) tells you something and you get angry. You turn into a man. OK you are not a man, but you are not a woman either. Because I am making money. I am also doing a man's job. (...) I see that all*

*(migrant) women here are like men. There are no more soft women. (Ennur, 27 August 2016, Istanbul)*

Ennur's words indicate the conflicting effects of changing identities, gendered expectations, roles, and relations within families due to the temporal and geographical distance which came between women and their families as a result of new livelihood and social reproduction imperatives. In the following paragraphs, I aim to situate Georgian migrant women's efforts in social reproductive work in the context of family structures and relations in the transnational space that spans between Turkey and Georgia, vis a vis the contemporary migration and transnational scholarship.

Migration across borders denotes the establishment of (gendered) transnational presence and personal ties. Although transnationalism is not a new phenomenon, the current scholarly interest on women's migration for social reproductive work, particularly from southern to northern countries for long periods of time, has led migration researchers to investigate the fundamental concepts as well as interactions and meanings in relation to families and associated gender and kinship roles. This investigation reveals the gendered dimension of transnational spaces which are manifest in migrants' motives, experiences, routes, and measure of obligations towards their families and their communities (Pessar & Mahler, 2003).

The centrality of women's roles as social reproductive agents may be conversely observed from the scarcity of studies which focus on alternative identities and migration courses. This study also reflects Georgian migrant women's accounts who overwhelmingly underscored their duties as women, mothers and mothers-in-law under constricting economic and political conditions, but does not lose sight of the wide range



of self-serving or alternative reasons or pleasures which may influence and may become associated with migration. Narratives of migrant women in the literature usually centre on feelings of responsibility towards their families as women or mothers, and the motive to improve economic conditions. Numerous women, on the other hand, also migrate in pursuit of other opportunities. For example, the Caribbean migrant women in Denmark in Olwig's (2018) study, proposed that curiosity, imagination and a desire to explore different cultures; in short, a sense of adventure, motivated their migration. Increasing numbers of female international students, particularly from the "global south" to "global north" are also noteworthy. In 2017, 45 percent of international students were women in Canada (Statista, 2017), while this percentage was 47.5 in Australia (Australian Government, 2016) and 52.7 percent of the non-European Union students in the United Kingdom (Universities UK, 2018). Research findings suggest that female and male international students have similar motivations for their migration: to receive high quality education for building a successful career in the global labour market, and preferably to settle as a migrant in the country of education or elsewhere (King & Sondhi, 2018). Furthermore, studies on women migrant labourers report that women may choose to migrate to avoid or escape an abusive husbands and/or bad, unhappy, oppressive family conditions (Constable, 2003 for the Philippines; Bastia, 2009 for Latin America; Sen, 2004 for historical accounts from India). In the context of post-Soviet women's migration around Eurasia, Alexia Bloch (2017) shows that migrant women labourers take up various jobs, ranging from being exotic dancers to suitcase traders and house cleaners in Istanbul. Bloch (2017) argues that although these women's movement as precarious workers is a response to global and local economic imperatives for them and their families' survival they still build meaningful lives independent of their families back

home. They do so by engaging in diverse intimate relationships with Turkish men and thus challenging gender and intimacy ideologies and restructuring family relations.

Comparably, the younger, never married three participants in this study told me that the reason they came to work in Turkey was financial investment towards a future in which they may (or may not) have families of their own that will consist of a husband, children and in-laws. In the meantime, they explored the life and working opportunities in Turkey in addition to saving money. For example, Muge was a returnee who was single and working in a supermarket in Tbilisi. She had worked as cleaner in various homes and hotels in Turkey for seven years before returning to Georgia because she had missed her mother who was living alone in Tbilisi. She spoke fondly of her time in Istanbul praising the municipal efficiency and the warmth of people and did not rule out that she might return there. At the time of our interview, she was about to start a job as an administrative assistant at a multinational company in Tbilisi where she was hired due to her Turkish and Russian language skills. She summarized her migration story:

The reason I went to Turkey were the economic problems after the war.

Everywhere was closed, wherever I worked closed down. We had no father so I decided to go. I am a journalist, I went to university for that. I thought I'd go work for 6 months and then come back. But did not happen. (...) The house is ours.

Now I bought a small land. Then I got this job (cashier at the supermarket). I did not want to stay at home doing nothing. You know how it is in Istanbul, it is alive, you never sit. My plan now is to start at the company, and build a house on that land that I bought. It is close by, ten minutes from Tbilisi. So everything is pretty much under control. (Muge, 16 August 2016, Tbilisi).

The other two participants had very similar plans in that they wanted to save enough to buy a house first, followed by a hopefully steady employment in Georgia. Apart from these three, all participants had been married, currently or at one point, and had parents-in-law and/or children in Georgia. They unequivocally gave meaning to their migration in their family context, with reference to duty to their families as women. The particular Georgian family structure which shapes migrant women's identities, obligations and agency, while simultaneously devalorizing their social reproductive labour will be discussed further in the following sections. Before that, I continue with the literature on migrant women and tease out the major themes which mostly mirror the anxieties around the severed ties and reconfigured relationships between migrant women and their children, families and communities.

#### 5.2.1. Migrant Women and Their Families

*"Because we had to"* was the most common statement I heard from Georgian migrant women when I asked why they migrated. At first glance, this statement expresses the desperation because of the dispossessing economic and political conditions in Georgia as outlined in *chapter three*. This statement further expresses the participants' responsibilities towards the social reproduction of their families as women, mothers and mothers-in-law. These responsibilities take a transnational form and are informed by gendered ideologies which determine Georgian women's life-long positions and roles in their families and their communities. In preeminent ways, Georgian migrant women's accounts of their migration and transnational activities are similar to those of migrant women around the globe.

Aside from the above-mentioned oversight on women's migration independent of family context, there is a plethora of studies which examine the content, extent and interpretations of gender norms and roles in relation to women's migration prescribed at family, community and national levels. By extension, researchers have also been interested in describing changes in family structures as a result of redistribution and redefinitions of familial gender roles, as well as new ways of articulating family relationships across transnational spaces. While, in general, women's migration poses a threat to women's roles as mothers and caregivers, the extent and magnitude of this migration's effects are influenced and in turn influence the interpretation of gender and family ideology, and by extension, the redistribution of feminine and masculine behaviours and obligations.

The migration of mothers crystallizes the discursive and material dimensions of the conflicting demands on a woman's social reproductive responsibilities and paid employment. One key notion underlying this tension is the assumption about women's "natural" connection to their children, and that they should be in close proximity to their children while providing care and emotional nurturance, which may come under threat if mothers take up paid employment. The ideologically and materially constructed pure, essential, and geographically and physically constricting ideal mother-child bond has also been problematized in the migration literature. The literature is concentrated on whether or not the relationship between mothers and children is damaged and/or has become strictly commodified. For example, drawing attention to the broken physical and geographical bond between mothers and children, Ehrenreich and Hochschild (2004) stress that the transfer of mothers and motherly love from third world countries to first

world countries has negative consequences on the third world children who may take drastic actions such as dropping out of school or even attempting suicide. Similarly, Parrenas (2005) describes gendered and class effects on the children of Filipina migrants. According to her findings, Filipina children of lower classes are more likely to feel abandoned, and dissatisfied, and less likely to develop and accept intimate relationship with their mothers.

Flowing from this, another emphasis is on the discourse of societal ills that follow the departure and absence of mothers (Parrenas 2000, in the Philippines; Bastia 2009, in Bolivia; Lutz and Palenga 2012, on “Euro-orphans” in Poland and Ukraine; Bakker, Elings-Pels & Reis 2009 on “Barrell children” in the Caribbean) and how mothers and families navigate the negative stereotypes/discourses which surround the “abandonment” of children and families by mothers. Women’s migration has been framed as heroic due to the sacrifice it requires and the benefit it brings by some states and media (in the Philippines, Barber, 2008a) while other states have tried to curtail women’s outmigration due to concerns around women’s role in the family and sexual reputation. For instance, Preibisch and Grez (2010) report that Mexican women were legally blocked from applying to Canada’s Temporary Foreign Worker Program until 1989 and after that, only single mothers were allowed to apply until 1998. These institutionalized practices were socially supported by family members and the public who continued to ostracize and discipline female migrant candidates. Bangladesh has placed and lifted bans on the outmigration of diverse groups of women several times since 1981 (Dannecker, 2005). Each of these restrictions ensured that women could not emigrate without male guardians

and were framed by the state as to protect Bangladeshi women's honour by keeping them with their families at home (ibid).

The prevalent ideology prescribing exclusive care from mothers to children was challenged by feminist scholars who showed that women have been engaging in productive work while at the same time caring for children (Collier & Yanagisako, 1987). Others argued that alternative family and mother-child relations are present. Stack and Burton (1993) show that in certain geographies of the US such as the northeastern community that they conducted their ethnographic study in, young mothers in black families shared responsibilities of mothering extensively with other female kin or friends. Again, challenging the notion of close physical proximity requirement between parents and children, Poeze and Mazzucato (2013) describe commonly accepted Ghanaian "foster parenting practices". This practice includes the circulation of children among family and non-family networks and the authors suggest that parenthood, and by extension motherhood, does not have to take place in one household (ibid). In tandem, in the Caribbean family structure, motherhood is not conceptualized as requiring exclusive "hands-on" care of children but rests more on financial contributions and a collective sense of family in which other family members take part in child-rearing (Olwig, 2013). Based on her ethnographic research with Caribbean transnational families, Olwig (2013) contends that migration and care are more associated with each other in that care circulates in Caribbean families, rather than a fixed caring ratio flowing from a mother to a child. More specifically in these families, changing care responsibilities for one's family brings about different migrations, and motherhood is a set of responsibilities which may take different forms, and thus performed by various kin at different life stages of a family.

Consequently, women's migration for family is considered more acceptable and even expected (ibid).

Other migration scholars endorse that motherhood is reconceptualized on a transnational scale and in general, they concur that the nurturing and caregiving part of motherhood is extended to include financial provision for better nutrition, clothing and schooling, a better living standard at the expense of being at close proximity. Hondagneu-Sotelo (1997) building on a social constructivist understanding of motherhood which acknowledges the underpinning effects of changing historical and social conditions, is one of the first researchers to show the (constricted) agency of Latina migrant women in transforming the meaning of motherhood to include the transnational. These Latina migrant women in the United States relied on a broad range of transnational childcare arrangements, and extended caregiving, disciplining, and guidance to their children across borders, in addition to being breadwinners (ibid). Migrant women generally have been found to stay connected to their children across geographies, recently even more so, through new technologies. Seeking to stay involved in their children's lives, some mothers sustain intimacy and pass along care as well as supervise, discipline and keep children under surveillance in a way that may be described as "intensive mothering" (Madianou, 2017, p.104).

Building on these findings, a more recent thread of scholarship is focused on transnational families. These studies examine the daily interactions and performances of reciprocal obligations based on culturally informed family roles and responsibilities, rather than focusing on unidirectional flow of care from mothers or migrant women to

their families. Furthermore, they problematize the construction of a dominant western and/or bourgeois ideal family which presumes a sedentary nuclear family and essential mother-child bonds, and favour the acceptance of different forms of family configurations including even the non-kin relationships (Baldassar & Merla, 2014). Accordingly, “transnational families” provide a larger analytical framework in which women’s obligations, preferences and agency with regards to gender ideologies and relations can be analyzed. Gendered family role expectations are found to shape both migrant women’s and other family members’ transnational connection experiences, while these roles also change in concerted ways.

With regards to motivations for migration, a formidable number of studies concur that women migrate precisely to stay home or to at least maintain a stable home, where “home” is defined as household or family (Morokvasic, 2004). Women’s accounts of their duties towards the members of their families, and negotiations of roles on transnational space however, are differentiated based on their gender, as well as on their cultural background, position in the family and even age (Zontini, 2009). For example, among Mexican migrant mothers and fathers, Dreby (2006) shows that gendered expectations in parenting prevailed in transnational context. From a distance, fathers’ relationship with their children was evaluated on the basis of whether or not they were able to provide financially for their children whereas mothers’ relationship depended on their commitment to emotional intimacy. In Sri Lanka, Gamburd (2004) describes the negotiations around changing gender roles and family structures, particularly between migrant women and their left-behind husbands. Sri Lankan men in this study responded to their wives’ migration by either asserting their masculinities through increased alcohol



consumption or by taking on feminine roles in families and communities. Arduous negotiations between migrant women and their husbands revealed various sets of strategies and changing gender relations available to women, men and families for securing family social reproduction amid constricting economic, social and political conditions (Gamburd, 2004). Salih (2001) suggests that Moroccan migrant women in Italy responded to, experienced, and shaped their migration and behaviour in transnational practices differently depending on their family roles, and class positions, even though their transnational practices revolved around the fulfilment of specific gendered roles towards their families in Morocco. Among this group of migrant women, those whose migration was not culturally and socially approved appeared to challenge hegemonic normative structures to a certain degree, or to even take advantage of such structures to distance themselves from their prescribed roles in Morocco to reconfigure or remake them transnationally, while still fulfilling social reproductive obligations (Salih, 2001).

This line of scholarship is sensitive to cultural norms which shape ideologies and by extension women's differentiated migration and transnationalism experiences. For example, when comparing different groups of migrant mothers in Europe Lutz (2011) found both similarities and differences between them. She showed that both Polish and Brazilian migrant mothers strove to present themselves as "good mothers" by not only providing materially for their families back home but also by drawing a picture of themselves as pious women. These two groups differed in their interpretation and accomplishment of transnational motherhood. Polish mothers subscribed to a strong traditional motherhood discourse which was intertwined with nationalism leading to

feelings of guilt on their part. Faced by these feelings and mother-blaming discourses they focused on defending themselves on the grounds that they were economically supporting their families and thus described themselves as taking on both feminine and masculine tasks. Brazilian mothers, on the other hand, because they accepted a broader range of family arrangements outside of traditional family and mother-child bonds, interpreted and organized their transnational actions around affectivity, transnational organization of childcare and strong reciprocal norms (Lutz, 2011). In the same vein, Zontini (2009) found that Filipino migrant women and Moroccan women in Southern Europe abided by culturally distinctive feminine roles while changing and adapting them to new circumstances. Differences between the two groups could even be discerned from their migration trajectory: Filipino migrant women were autonomous in their migration while Moroccan women migrated for family reunification purposes. Filipino women accepted that they had to sacrifice for their families' good and never stopped sending substantial amounts of remittances to their families, while Moroccan women gave priority to their own racialized nuclear family's well-being in Italy and kept their transnational family connections alive by personal investments in Morocco (Zontini, 2009).

These studies, although diverse in focus and findings, still lay out a number of common themes. First is that most migrant women frame their migration and transnational commitments in reference to their families and their social reproductive responsibilities (Zontini, 2009). Relatedly, a gendered division of labour exists across families and communities which conceptualize and rely on women as central figures in the social reproduction of families and communities, and this is more or less independent of the cultural beliefs on the intensity of mother-child dyad. Furthermore, gendered

division of labour within families seem to stay intact in most transnational families. Social reproductive responsibilities are transformed in form and substance, and are mostly redistributed among women, whether they are mothers or not. Perhaps more illustrative of this point, all studies covered above, even though some note slight variations, state that most migrant women mothers entrust their children to their female relatives, particularly their own mothers and/or a combination of other female kin and fictive kin thus maintaining the traditional gendered division of labour. These studies also uniformly confirm that gendered expectations of women at family, community and state levels are articulated in the transnational space across different stages of women's migration, that is, from planning to settlement or return.

Notwithstanding the different theoretical positions, this body of scholarship highlights the importance of discerning the nuances of gender ideologies and normative family roles behind women's migration and transnationalism experiences. In light of this assertion, this study maps out the intricate, intimate and transforming Georgian family and kinship organization principles, which maintain the gendered division of labour. It does so by examining the content and extent of constricting ideological structures which govern the distribution of material resources and responsibility patterns within families and societies. This examination captures a more comprehensive depiction of migrant women's agency because it takes into account the special formation of Georgian multi-generational families. Moreover, in this context, with the inclusion of "time" factor, the study group's intentions and efforts in reproducing micro and macro level social reproductive structures, as well as their own gendered social reproductive positions, are laid out. Hence agency is evaluated at cognitive as well as physical levels, with

considerations of engagement patterns with (gender and family) ideologies, and remittance and chore distribution, inter-family communication, and physical movement patterns. Here, my findings diverge from those found in the above discussed literature which focuses on the redistribution, and to an extent the renegotiation of social reproductive work and roles within and across families. Inclusion of time as a factor, and of considerations at both material and ideological levels sheds light into mechanisms of not only daily social reproduction processes (of maintaining cheap labour force) but also the mechanisms of generational social reproduction which will ultimately maintain/reproduce the capitalist production and social reproduction relations. These mechanisms cement women's role in the local and transnational gendered division of labour, and contribute to the establishment of Georgia's and Georgian families place in capitalist restructuring of globally configured labour markets, and production and social reproduction relations.

To reiterate, migrant Georgian women who had children explained their migration and transnational links with reference to their families and their social reproductive roles. The latter were indexed to their specific age- and position-related roles in the Georgian household and family organization. Gendered expectations rooted in this organization, and sustained at society level, brought about feelings of necessity as well as anxieties about countering them. My findings suggest that migrant women engage in transnational practices which are calibrated to keep their gendered positions in their families while at the same time they chose to transform some roles and challenge certain facets of gender ideologies. I now turn to the particularities of Georgian gender ideologies and family structures that the participants elucidated.

### **5.3. WOMEN IN GEORGIA**

*Men in Georgia should be right-minded and straightforward. And honest, and hard working. But now there are no jobs for them. Women should be beautiful inside-out, hard-working, virtuous and should love the husband and children. I don't like immoral women. I love women who love their husband and children. (Zerrin, 14 January 2017, Istanbul)*

My conversations with Georgian migrant women about women's and men's responsibilities generally echoed Zerrin's statement, which is further supported by research on this issue. According to a recent study conducted in Georgia (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2013) forming a family and family life are central to Georgian individuals' identities and lifestyles. Family takes first place in a hierarchy of values for the vast majority of Georgian women and men (p. 16) and as an institution, family is related to Georgian traditions and national identity. Accordingly, there are established beliefs regarding how a good Georgian family should be, how family members should behave and what duties and responsibilities each member should have – based on their gender (p.17). Regarding the roles of the marriage partners; to be a good husband means being a real Georgian man which consists of being the head of the house, making all the main decisions and being the breadwinner. Women on the other hand, are expected to be doing most of the housework and caring for her children, willing to be protected, as well as being obedient and reserved (Javakhishvili, 2008). A Georgian woman is characterized as “devoted to the family” with a strong maternal instinct which puts her children as a major priority in her life- although both men and women believe that motherhood and fatherhood are the most important roles in their lives (United

Nations Development Programme, 2013, p. 25). In short, a woman's main function is to raise children and take care of the household chores while a man's function is to support the family financially and these gender roles are considered to be natural continuation of the essence of women and men (ibid).

Georgian migrant women in my study expressed similar views on gendered division of labour where a woman's job is housework. I determined that even though they and their mothers may have worked for wages in Georgia, whether at jobs or in *Kolkhozes*, they fulfilled their domestic duties: they did all household chores, such as cooking, cleaning, and doing the dishes. Some men did take on occasional cooking, and child caring (for a few hours), but apart from that they "only work, and when there is no work they just sit at home" (Zerrin, 14 January 2017, Istanbul). As we will see in the following section, domestic chores can be distributed between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, or among other women who live in the same household. Nimet explained the gendered family roles in households in detail:

Georgian men and women? In our tradition, it is different than yours (...) The women should stay a bit lower than her husband. Yes he will decide, though maybe not for everything. If we suggest something he should say 'yes' (...) We both used to work. After I gave birth he worked. He brought the money home (...)

No, a man would not clean the house. He would leave in the morning, come back in the evening. It is us who do the cleaning, cooking, and shopping. Say, if I were there now, at home, he would not do any of these. Men would not.

My son went to France, he took care of himself, he did all his chores. But that was different. When there is a woman at home, they (men) would not do anything. Now, he helps his wife but it is my daughter-in-law who works and takes care of the house. (Nimet, 20 December 2016, Istanbul)

By extension of their love for their husband and children, the respondents felt responsible for children's overall well-being and believed that their children were worth hard work and sacrifice. Many respondents in this study reiterated that the reason that they were in Turkey was for their children and even though they contemplated going back after finishing off their debts they stayed longer for their children. Melahat, for instance, has two grown sons who are married with children. She was in Istanbul for seven years at the time of our interview and had already paid off her debt. She wanted to support her grandchildren by keeping them well-fed and paying their school tuitions. When I asked what she did when she felt down:

I go buy a (telephone) card, and talk to my family, I cry. When I cry I feel better. Sometimes I cry while watching TV. I cry easily. I was not like that before. Maybe because of my life... they missed me, even the dog missed me a lot. But I keep telling my-self: “(Melahat), have patience, patience, patience. It is for children”. I want everything for my children, I don't have a husband but I want them to be good.” (Melahat, 30 August 2016, Istanbul).

Hatice explained children's life-long importance for women as such:

I for example become sad whenever I hear someone new coming to Turkey. Because they have to leave family, it does not matter whether the children are young or old. Some young women come too, so their children must be real young.

The biggest problem is that you leave your children with others, they are trustworthy yes, but still children want their moms. My daughter was 19 years old, when I left her it was even difficult for her. My son was 22 years old, but he even said “mom, it is difficult without you”. Because they were used to me being around, giving money, doing everything. They were left like that, had to do things by themselves. I was the master of the house. (Hatice, 25 December 2016, Istanbul)

Women’s migration contained a further self-sacrifice, as their salaries were designated only for their children and their families, whether to pay for food, accommodation, school fees, clothes, extracurricular activities, weddings, or investment for present or future income generation. Migrant women’s spending patterns will be explored further in this chapter, but for now, Tijen’s words outline the general idea:

Look at my phone, I have had the same phone for six years. I don’t want different, newer model. I spend only a little for myself, I buy it cheap for myself. I don’t buy brand name. My boss gives me nice clothes too. Because, I came here for money. I don’t want clothes, I always think of my children. Thank God, we have food at home (with the employer), so I always think of my home. (Tijen, 9 August 2016, Istanbul).

Georgian migrant women’s own stories and interpretations, as well as the literature on women’s positions in families and labour markets suggest that a gendered division of labour similar to what is described above was found in Soviet times and sustained to a degree by Soviet government policies and practices. This point is important in tracing the



persistence of such a division of labour which ultimately causes the devalorization of women's labour even in the face of what can be considered more progressive legislation and egalitarian policies. Writing about this, Molyneux (1981, p. 166-167) reiterates that Socialist reforms had the explicit twin aims of emancipating women and establishing social (class) equality and thus made possible some definitive positive improvements in women's positions. At the same time, this improvement was uneven, and emancipation on certain fronts did not erase all subordination because of gendered state social policies being inscribed into political and economic organization (ibid, p. 167). The limited literature on women in (ex)Soviet countries confirms the uneven and contradictory effects of socialist economic, political and social structures on women's position which reflected and sustained gendered expectations.

Most important of these gendered expectations were those related to women's role as caregivers within the family, and as mothers, which were frequently reiterated in state and popular discourses. In this vein, in her ethnographic work of post-Socialist Romania, Verdery (1996) argues that in Socialist Romania the legislation of gender equality was set in specific ways that served to reinforce the significance of gender differences even while ostensibly undermining them because women's value was first and foremost tied to their ability to give birth to and raise the next generation. In other words, Romanian women were first and foremost mothers of the nation. Goldman (1993) ascertains that following the Bolshevik Revolution, the Soviet state forcefully interfered to undermine pre-Soviet kinship system and family structures with to organize women as a political and economic force. These actions resulted in transferring (some of) women's work to the public domain, but did not actually challenge men into sharing women's work. This caused a

double burden, which was also compounded by women's minimal political representation. Such a sustained division of labour was manifest in family life, labour markets and politics. Ishkanian (2013) for example, in her comparative work of Azarbaijan and Armenia, chronicles the Socialist governments' efforts in establishing women's rights to inheritance, divorce and maternity leave, as well as the right to be paid as individual labourers (as opposed to family payments). These newly declared women's rights were simultaneously complemented by other legislation which exponentially encouraged and compensated women to have more children. Kiedeckel (2002) and Pine (2002) contend that respectively in Romania and Poland, while women were supported through welfare services for childcare, they were still held responsible for all domestic chores in addition to work outside the home. In tandem, although women's education and labour market participation levels were at par with those of men across Socialist states, the labour markets were also gendered. Women were overrepresented in lower positions in lower paying sectors and jobs, frequently in the realm of professionalized care, education, and health services (Read & Thelen, 2007). The political sphere was also considered quite masculine as the majority of the Party leadership were men (despite a quota system) (Ishkanian, 2013; Verdery, 1996).

Here we can conclude that the basic features of macro and micro structures which tie and valorize women's work mostly vis a vis their essentialized social reproductive roles were, to varying degrees, present in ex-Soviet countries and more specifically, in Georgia. This historical account is parallel to the long lasting and unwavering gendered division of labour and devalorization of women's labour in the more contemporary and capitalist labour and political realms across the world, as observed by feminist political

economy scholars (see summary of their position in *chapter two*). In light of this information, it is not surprising that the respondents in this study underscored their identities as family women and acted to fulfill their social reproductive roles which included extending care to family members as required as well as maintaining a family structure.

### 5.3.1. Georgian Migrant Women and Their Families

*Ester: It is very difficult in Georgia. Look, I came here at what age? I am 61 years old.*

*What am I doing here? I should stay home and take care of grandchildren. But what can you do?*

*Ennur: But you do take care of your grandchild, you send her money. That's taking care too. That's the best way to take care. (27 August 2016, Istanbul)*

Ester and Ennur's exchange illustrates the tension that migrant women feel as they physically have to distance themselves from their families, leaving their children, grandchildren and husbands behind, in order to care for them. These women transgress Georgian gender ideologies, transform them upon their migration, to ultimately upkeep them. The transformation usually means an extension of their gendered responsibilities to include alternative forms and rhythms of their physical and transnational caring presence, as well as developing measured challenges and redefinitions. Nevertheless, in the end, I found that these transformed roles are geared to secure their positions in their families, and by extension the continuation of a strict gendered division of labour and its supporting family/household organization.

As mentioned earlier, migrations and transnational experiences are gendered across all stages of migration. In this vein, there have been very few studies of Georgian migrant women's and Georgian communities' perceptions and experiences of migration. This situation parallels the lack of comprehensive and systematic national statistics and the Georgian state's dawdling efforts in migration-related policy development and implementation. Findings from a handful of studies on Georgian migration and statistics suggest a gendered view on emigration which is closely tied to men and women's culturally constructed characteristics and gender roles as summarised in the previous section. In one of the more comprehensive studies of Georgian returnees, Hofmann and Buckley (2013) reiterated the gendered nature of emigration from Georgia, as I outlined in *chapter three*: Georgian men's contemporary migration is more circular in nature and is tied to short-term labourer needs in neighbouring countries such as the Ukraine and Russia, whereas women emigrate to European countries and Turkey for jobs in the domestic sector for longer periods of time. Their findings showed that while men's and women's migration were both clearly motivated by economic need, men's migration was depicted as an opportunity for personal growth, for seizing economic opportunities, and to experience adventures. In contrast, women's migration was imagined in ways that reinforced traditional feminine roles by stressing the importance of female sacrifice, especially in the case of mothers, and minimizing issues of choice and agency (Hofmann & Buckley, 2013). In addition, both Georgian men and women thought that women's contributions to families and communities were irreplaceable, indicating that only (other) women, rather than men, could fulfill these roles upon women's emigration (ibid). Women's migration thus was interpreted as unnatural and thus faced with the anxiety of transgressing gender roles, migrant women justified their international mobility by

playing down its norm-challenging features and instead accentuating their migration as a necessary component of women's social reproductive responsibilities (Hoffman & Buckley, 2012). Hoffman (2014) further noted that there was a strong association between women's outmigration and their family status and life course stage. Specifically, women who were married were less likely to migrate than single women or than those who lived in female-headed households. Other differentiating factors included the availability of female relatives who could take over the domestic responsibilities and whether the household organization was more or less traditional (Hoffman, 2014). One final finding in these studies was the decreasing stigmas around migrant women. Hoffman and Buckley (2012; 2013) concluded that women's migration was slowly being reframed from a transgression to natural gender orders and relations to being subsumed under the natural caregiving responsibilities of women.

These studies' stance is to explore women's empowerment and any emancipatory changes in gender ideologies as a result of women's migration. They interpret their findings such that the incorporation of migration under traditional gender norms as women's responsibility did not change hegemonic gender ideologies or relations per se, and may even have prepared the ground for their continuation (ibid). Whether proletarianization (thus accessing independent wages) and/or migration create more equalitarian gender relations, or empower women, is a contested issue in literature. Wages earned through devalued work and from a distance in the case of women migrants, are found to bring certain material and class position benefit to women and their families, and to enable them challenge certain aspects of male control and authority. However, these are usually reported not to change women's subordinated position in families or

societies: these gains do not bring major relief to women from their family related social reproductive responsibilities; do not allow them control family or societal resources and allocations; nor do they refrain women from upholding oppressive gender ideologies (Ozyegin, 2001 for Turkish domestic labourers, Hofmann & Buckley, 2012 for Georgian migrants; Preibisch and Encalada Grez, 2013 for Latin American migrant women). In an illustrative study, Fitting (2016) reported the decisive influence of gender ideologies on men and women migrants in rural Mexico. Local gendered expectations which precluded women travelling long distances without male companions led to two different outmigration patterns in search of wages: men migrating internationally to the U.S., and women taking up travel locally to maquilas as a nascent labour force. Even though women appreciated an increased economic social standing, a sense of independence, and higher respect in their households, they still experienced anxiety for transgressing gender roles, and inadvertently supported and reproduced gendered division of labour at local and global scales by working at gender specific jobs in maquilas (Fitting, 2016).

My findings are similar to those reported by Hoffman and Buckley (2012, 2013) and Hoffman (2014) in that the participants in my study framed their migration as a necessity or part of their social reproductive responsibility and that they had to sacrifice for their children's benefit. They reflected that they had to migrate and in this process, they had to go against gender ideologies under which Georgian families and society are shaped. However, in their studies these researchers assume that Georgian households act in concert, or in unison, when they decide which member of the family should migrate. While these studies pay attention to migrant women's position in a family and the availability of other women in the family inform whether or not women would migrate,

they miss addressing the issue of agency. For example, participants in my study exhibited a nuanced agency which sometimes, at least at the beginning, meant going against their family members' explicit disapproval. This issue will be explored more deeply when I discuss migrant women's decision to come to Turkey. In this context, another dimension which should be assessed is the future that migrant women imagine for themselves and how choices to migrate are as much influenced by women's current and future positions in their families. In relation to empowerment which stems from being the main provider of family, the chapter will show that migrant women continue to uphold and guard men's financial authority by relying on gender ideologies remnant from Soviet times, when women were expected to hold professional waged work.

Migrant women in this study presented their migration decisions, choices and experiences in the context of their gendered family and societal positions of being a woman, mother, and mother/daughter-in-law. Although their accounts suggest a degree of helplessness and devotion or even self-sacrifice for family, as will be shown in the following sections, Georgian women made decisions which reflected their priorities and evaluation of their current and potential restrictions and access to resources based on their gendered positions. These decisions sometimes meant going against family members' wishes, particularly those of men. It also sometimes meant that migrant women changed or adjusted their decisions, still under constricting economic and political conditions, with reference to their current and future positions in their families. Here it is important to examine the women's roles in a nuanced manner, particularly the construct of mother(in-law)hood in Georgian families. The following section describes patri-local practices and study respondents' "in-law-hood" trajectory therein.

### 5.3.2. Daughter Is Another's

*Here (in Turkey), when they marry they open a new house, they all separate. But it is not like that with us, the tradition. (Hatice, 25 December 2016, Istanbul)*

What Hatice is referring to as “the tradition”, when answering my question of who takes care of her own parents, is the intricately premeditated and practiced tradition of patrilocality. She further explained the issue of taking care of parents:

We are two siblings: my older brother and me. Now my brother and his family are taking care of my parents. That's how it is with us. The son takes care of parents. If there are two brothers then the younger one stays. The daughter marries and goes off.

Hatice's words describe a “tradition” that I was told of many times by the participants and as it is a major social reproductive strategy, it requires further attention.

One reality of the Georgian migrant women in this study that other contemporary studies of women's migrations have not touched on is the importance of patrilocal practices in the construction of livelihoods, family social reproduction strategies, and gendered positions and identities. As a social norm and a major organizing principle of households and kinship practices, patrilocality means that married sons will reside with their parents while married women will move to their husbands' family's household (Grogan, 2007). On this issue, Collier and Yanagisako (1987) contend that gender and kinship are mutually constructed, culturally specific and dialectically related to the political economy of particular locales. As such, familial relations and gender constructions of both sexes are defined and achieved in a wider, cultural systems of



meaning (femininity and masculinity), and in relation to structural inequalities which provide goals and resources for each (Collier & Yanagisako, 1987). It is in patrilocal practices that Georgian migrant women's actions and identities find meaning, while at the same their unpaid social reproductive labour is appropriated for capital accumulation and for the reproduction of gendered inequalities and divisions of labour. Relatedly, their agency should be understood in this microstructure.

I first noticed patrilocal practices during the life history interview with Sevda, who repeatedly talked about how she cared for her Mom and Dad, and how she needed money for Mom's operation. After some time, I had to ask whether this was her own Mom or her mother-in-law, as I knew that Sevda was married with two children and living in a farm with her parents-in-law. Indeed, the affectionate words and concern were expressed for her mother-in-law. According to one wide reaching study, only 28 percent of Georgian families live with the husbands' parents, while the majority of Georgian families live in separate households and nine percent with those of wife's (United Nations Development Programme, 2013). However, for the migrant women in my study and in the neighbourhoods that I visited in Georgia, patrilocality was an accepted and expected norm. All participants, whether they came from rural (for example Gori and Ozurgeti) or urban (for instance Tbilisi and Batumi) centres, referred to this norm as customary, while its practice in time and length depended on life circumstances, and variations were considered to be only deviations from this practice.

Patrilocality is an expected practice, one of their traditions, as I was told many times by Georgian women. Its outlook consists of a gendered and generational family

composition, where residence rules organize gender roles and the distribution of resources, including salary and distribution of inheritance. As the above quote indicates, the son(s) are expected to care for their parents. One son, most commonly the youngest in the case where there is more than one son, is expected to stay with his parents, which also includes bringing his wife into his parents' residence. The daughters, in contrast, are expected to move out, and become a daughter to her in-laws, or in other words to "have their own home".

With a couple of exceptions, which I will further discuss below, all married respondents lived at one point, or were still living, with their parents-in-law. The living arrangements may even take place in very cramped quarters. In some of the two bedroom small apartments that I visited in Tbilisi, families shared the space as two couples: mother-in-law and father-in-law, and son and daughter-in-law with their own children. There are more rules in this practice. For example, those whose husbands pass away stay at their in-laws' house. In contrast, a divorced woman move back to her own parents' home. Women who marry an oldest son live with the in-laws until the youngest son gets married, at which point they have to move out – meaning they have to buy their own house. In this scenario, the older sons and their families have access to more mobility but also have to incur more financial burden. Finally, when the parents-in-law pass away, the house is left to the (youngest) son and/or his wife, who then leaves it to their own (youngest) son and his wife.

Exceptions to this rule are found when a family only has daughters and thus they rely on acquiring sons-in-law. One example is Esra, whose husband moved into Esra's

parents' house, and lived there during the entirety of their marriage, about 23 years.

Although they were economically in good shape, Esra never had the intention of moving out to a place of her own (with her husband) – partly also because her mother had been looking after her children since she migrated to Turkey five years ago. Likewise, Sevda and Tumay, are two migrant women with two daughters each. They support their daughters by working in Turkey. Tumay's words reflect both women's plans for future:

What can I do? I live for them. There is no man, no son, no daughter-in-law.

Nobody. And with no daughter-in-law for me, and when I need help later, they (daughters) will take care of me, who else? (Tumay, 15 January 2017, Istanbul)

Such patrilocal practices are also one mechanism through which a gendered and generational division of labour is sustained. This practice illustrates how current social reproductive work sustains present family members and relations while at the same time serving as an attempt to secure future family and social reproduction relations, indicating the reproduction of kinship and family structures. In tandem, my findings suggest that Georgian migrant women's identities are formed in relation to a three-pronged construct of womanhood, which also implies a temporal dimension: being a daughter-in-law, mother, and mother-in-law, and being a good one according to Georgian cultural scripts. And for them, such identities inform and in return are constructed by their accounts of migration, and social reproductive work which now takes place transnationally.

I now turn to how patrilocal relations are being sustained across time and space once women leave their house. I first start by discussing how migrant women deal with the initial threat which befalls patrilocal practices and the associated construction of womanhood when women consider migration. Following this, I discuss how

responsibilities, roles, and relatedly, surplus value and remittances are redistributed while positions are re-negotiated or re-affirmed. I show that migrant women extend their social reproductive work towards their families to keep patrilocal social reproduction relations in place.

#### **5.4. MOTHER/DAUGHTER (IN-LAW)HOOD**

*Q: Who does the chores in the house; the man or the woman?*

*R: Mother in law! Hahahhaa! (anonymous participant, 3 July 2016, Istanbul)*

As in-laws and mothers, Georgian women are responsible for the “domestic life” of the household – even when/if they work full time. It is expected that mothers-in-law care for grandchildren, and are responsible for the well-being of the family. In particular, they oversee the “domestic budget” which consists of the household expenses for familial social reproduction needs (which will be further elaborated below). Other chores, such as cooking, tidying, and cleaning the house are usually shared with daughters-in-law. When Georgian women expressed that they migrated to Turkey because they had to, this imposition is based on their position and role in their families, which suggests two interrelated aims: to keep families together and earn and/or administer the domestic budget. The migration of women means a re-distribution and re-configuration of such social reproductive roles among women in the patrilocal household.

Many migrant mothers-in-law mentioned that they work in Turkey in order to keep their families together in Georgia. In Duygu’s words:

My daughter-in-law wanted to come here too, I said ‘you will not go anywhere. I am an old woman, you are a young woman, you have a child, you take care of your husband. So you stay and I will go.’ I send her money. I send her my whole salary (Duygu, 17 July 2016).

Nimet’s son had a chance to live in France due to his sports career but she would not hear of it:

He really wanted to stay there but I cried a lot, I begged a lot. The daughter-in-law wanted to go too. I said ‘I will go to Turkey for you.’ You know, I only have one son, I will go to an empty house, it will be very difficult for me. (Nimet, 20 December 2016, Istanbul)

When Georgian women left for Turkey, their absence had to be physically filled.

Literature review at the beginning of this chapter confirms that migrant women delegate some portion of their hands-on social reproductive responsibilities in the household to other women in the family (Barber, 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1997; Parrenas, 2005; Zontini, 2009; Lutz, 2011; Olwig, 2013; Madianou, 2017). Other women in the family typically include a migrant woman’s own mother, sister, daughter or other relative which sometimes may also mean hiring domestic labourers to help them. In this study, these other women were mainly daughters-in-law, mothers-in-law, daughters – if they are unmarried – and in some cases sisters-in-law who lent a hand to mothers-in-law or husbands. There were also a few cases where women left their children under the care of their husbands. This arrangement usually happened when there were no other women in the family.

This gendered delegation of chores and responsibilities points to the maintenance of patrilocal practices and relatedly, a gendered division of labour. It points to transfer of value from developing to developed countries and the maintenance of gendered division of labour. Here, I further suggest that migrant women's social reproductive work toward their families reinforces and secures the longevity of structures which guarantee this transfer of value now and into the future. In tandem, Georgian migrant women's accounts, as discussed herein, point to a life cycle dimension of social reproduction in which migrant women take on migration based on their positions in patrilocal families and to make such practices and positions continue. This continuation secures not only the present but also the future extraction of surplus labour from women for social reproduction, and the transfer of surplus emotional, physical and mental labour from poorer women to richer women.

For example, Tijen, who left her young children behind with her mother-in-law at the time of her migration six years before our interview, projected a long-term vision for herself and her family:

My father-in-law was sick, my husband had an operation. So I took loan from the bank, the interest goes up if you can't pay on time etc. so I had to come here. Now it is all finished. I was able to both pay that and provide money for food. Thank God. I send my salary to the kids, my mother-in-law and the kids. It is being used to renovate the house. I still have children: two boys to marry. After that, I will be a mother-in-law. There is always something to do. One finishes the other starts. At first, I was scared a bit. But I was standing upright so that nobody

saw that I was afraid. Also for my family. That's why I stood upright (Tijen, 9 August 2016, Istanbul).

Indeed, Tijen's family had reached financial solvency at the time of our interview since both her sons and her husband were working for wages in Georgia. Tijen was preparing to progress from being a daughter-in-law and mother to being a mother-in-law. For this purpose, she had to save for two weddings. Later on, one son and his family will stay with her, while the other will move out with his family. Tijen's future plans should include supporting both sons' families, though her house will be transferred to the one who will live with her and take care of her.

In the following two sections, I continue to show how women's and men's positions vis-à-vis production, social reproduction, familial and societal goals are retained in convoluted ways. As we already saw, Georgian women extend migration with the intention of keeping their families and patrilocal practices intact. I will now discuss two other major responsibilities of women: overseeing the domestic budget and maintaining a transnational family via contact and supervision.

#### 5.4.1. Domestic Budget

*They (son and daughter-in-law) decide how to spend their own money. They have a child. Both decide but my son is the one who decides. They sit together, talk about where to spend the money, then they decide. But my son decides more. (Nimet, 20 December 2016, Istanbul)*

As this quote shows, in Nimet's household, her son is considered to be the decision maker on how to spend his family's wages. This assigned role is in line with the above reported findings about Georgian gendered family roles where men are expected to be the main decision makers and breadwinners. Although supported by migrant women in my study, this ideology is currently being challenged by the fact that men do not make as much salary as their migrant wives or mothers. Accordingly, migrant women's wages need to be reinterpreted in reference to the prevalent wage ideology. Georgian families deploy several discursive strategies, to steer away from framing migrant women as "breadwinners".

As highlighted by socialist feminist literature, one of the ways in which the male dominant gender ideology reflects itself is in wage ideologies. Market wages have historically been a reflection of ideologies related to tasks that were assigned to men and women in families and accompanying general gender orders (Kessler-Harris, 2014). Kessler-Harris (2014), in her book, summarizes the evolution of wage ideologies and traces the connection between them and the public and labour policies, wage gaps, and gender segregated markets since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. She reflects that over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, through feminist interventions and the sinking of real wages as a result of new political economic conditions (such as the introduction of neoliberal economic policies) the "male breadwinner ideology" has lost its appeal and applicability. Socialist feminists tie the gendered associations in wage ideologies to the labelling of men as "producers" in capitalism paralleled by women's association with social reproduction (Fraser, 2017). Fraser, for example (2017) recognizes a change in wage ideologies from "male breadwinner" to a more modern "dual earner" (p. 26) form,



arguing that still, both forms rest on the devalorization of women's labour by its association with social reproduction. Indeed, both wage ideologies still support capitalism's dependence on the cheap social reproductive services of women (ibid).

My interest here is on the "male breadwinner" ideology because of its relevance in the Georgian case. Kessler-Harris (2014) discerns that industrialization marked the beginning of the "male breadwinner" ideology where men became associated with the role of provider to economically support their families. Women were assigned a feminine role which prescribed staying home and taking care of children and the elderly. The repercussions of this ideology in the households and labour markets was that a woman's wage was treated as complementary (to that of men), often seen as "pin money" (Kessler-Harris, 2014, p.123). This ideology thus translated into women finding jobs in mostly female sectors (teaching, nursing) or as part-time workers rather than full-time. In the latter case they were likely to be laid off first. The "male breadwinner" ideology induced various wage generation and budgeting practices in families where men were not only seen as responsible for wage generation but also for the distribution of said wages in the household. Studies show that in households, the treatment of women's wages as "pin money" had two contradictory attributes. According to Whitehead (1981) on the one hand, this money was at women's own disposal and thus implied her independence. On the other hand, and relatedly, this money was not essential to her subsistence and thus implied her dependence on the breadwinner. Women therefore did not have a say in the production and distribution of a family wage and surplus even when they earned wages. In other words, power within the family is not determined by commodity relations, that is,

it is not dependent on the basis of relative labour input into production or wages, or the amount of wages in that matter (Whitehead, 1981).

Luxton (1980)'s ethnography on Canadian wives of factory workers goes into remarkable detail about budgeting practices in working class families in the 1970s. These families consist of working husbands and housewives, and abide by the "male breadwinner" ideology. The author outlines three types of budgeting and spending practices. In the first scenario a man gives most or all of his wages to his wife. In the second scenario, a man keeps all the money and when asked to, he gives some to his wife for housekeeping and personal expenses. The third type of practice involves men putting the money in a mutually accessible place and both husband and wife spending from it as the bills arrive. Luxton's (1980) main argument is that managing household expenses is considered a necessary part of social reproductive work and thus is bestowed on women. Relatedly, in all three budgeting groups, although women spend for the household from men's wages, with varying degrees of freedom, ultimately they do not have the power to decide how to spend money in ways that do not serve the household, or in ways that are not approved by their husbands (Luxton, 1980).

My conversations with Georgian women suggested that budgeting practices reflect the "male breadwinner" ideology which used to be practiced in Georgian families, despite the high levels of labour market participation of women. Although the belief is still alive, the practices are certainly different yet paradoxically supportive of this ideology. In tandem with the above presented evidence, managing household related expenses is seen as a key social reproductive responsibility expected of women even though the comprehensive control of funds rests with men. Georgian migrant women reported that in the past, when men earned good salaries and when most women worked

for wages too, men controlled the wages, at least what they brought home, and they determined whether the distribution of the wages was to be discussed or not. Mostly, the control showed itself in two distinct patterns: first on the decision over any surplus – what is left over after the household and other necessary expenses such as subsistence, clothing and house/car payments, and second: keeping personal pocket money for themselves. Discussions with participants revealed that most men, even if they brought their salary home to be managed by their wives because they “are the woman, *hanim* (lady), of the house” so they know how to manage a household and thus can buy anything they want, men still kept an undisclosed amount for themselves. Both men and women agreed that it was men’s responsibility to bring the family wage home and separate a portion out of it which remained under the management of women. This portion is, what I am calling the “domestic budget”. Nowadays husbands who earn a (small) wage are usually in charge of their own earnings and mostly are not expected to contribute to the domestic budget.

Different ways of budgeting exist in Georgian families, in slightly complicated forms because of the multigenerational nature of the families. Tijen’s case is illustrative of wage ideologies, and changing control patterns, depending on the life stage and family members’ employment. Tijen came to Turkey 6 years ago, leaving her children then aged 10 and 11 under her mother-in-law’s care. She explained:

Before (marriage) I used to work, so I used to keep my own money. After getting married I moved to my mother-in-law’s house. Since I did not work then, when I needed money I asked my father-in-law. There was no control, I was given the money whenever I wanted. My mother-in-law did the same, she asked for money. Now, after my father-in-law died, my mother-in law-controls the money. She is

the one who distributes it. So when my children need money she gives them. She controls. But this is not bad. I give her (my salary) willingly, she will not (over)spend it. She will spend it slowly, with care. On the phone she always tells me what she's done with the money. (Tijen, 9 August 2016, Istanbul)

Before marriage then, Tijen, as a daughter, was not expected to contribute to the family budget at all. Her wages were not treated as being essential to her subsistence. After marriage, the household into which she married exhibited a budgeting practice where the older male exercised overt control. At that time she still was not expected to contribute to the family wage although her and her mother-in-law's expenses were more likely to be related to the household and stayed within acceptable limits. After the death of the father-in-law, and Tijen's emigration, this family seems to have switched to a different budgeting practice, one which reflects the management of the "domestic budget" by women given the lack of a "male breadwinner".

This quote reflects not only a few of the several budgeting types that have existed in Georgian families, but also the gendered sharing and transfer of duties between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law in this study. For the migrant daughters-in-law, mothers-in-law were the natural choice of caregiver for their children –and their husbands- when they left. The mother-in-law carried on her with her duties as expected, like taking care of children, overseeing the (domestic) budget, and other domestic chores, perhaps with less help. However, most of the migrants were mothers-in-law and they had to continue to be so under transnational arrangements. As mothers-in-law themselves, many migrant women still held the position of manager in relation to the domestic

responsibilities including the “domestic budget” management, or they made sure that they seamlessly passed some of their duties to the daughter-in-law.

For example, Meryem, whose household comprised of her mother-in-law, husband, daughter and grand-daughter, experienced different types of budgeting as a result of her marriage and later on, migration. Meryem used to work for wages before Georgia’s independence from the Soviet Union:

(Before migration) nobody controlled the money. We used to both spend from it. Me and my husband, we used to talk and decide together. We would not hide money. He used to bring the whole money home. But now it is my daughter, she does what she wants, she arranges. I send her my salary, I know she has to pay the bank etc. Now we know where the money goes anyway. With my parents, my dad used to control everything. Mom and Dad were good family. They used to get along well. She was a housewife. Dad brought the money. Dad was a hair dresser (men’s) in my village. Mom worked in our grape garden, she used to make wine, vodka. It was a kolkhoz. It was a big garden, she had to work there anyway. (Meryem, 16 December 2016, Istanbul)

Meryem recounts a more equitable spending pattern during her marriage, although she admits that it is men’s responsibility to bring home the family wage. This can be determined with how she labels her mother as a “housewife” and explains that her father used to make the wage that he controlled: control of her mother’s wages was clearly not an issue. Her own husband brought home his whole salary, but this was something that needed to be mentioned and that later on, during our conversations, Meryem indicated that the wages that her husband brought home was mostly spent by her on household

expenses. Finally, after her migration, even though her husband worked at some odd jobs in house renovation, his wages became unavailable for control. At the time of interview, Meryem's daughter oversaw "the domestic budget" which consisted of her own salary and Meryem's remittances, because the grandmother was too old, and Meryem did not have a son or daughter-in-law.

Nilay's husband more explicitly controlled the household budget during the Soviet times. However, after he lost his job and the family lost their house during the turbulent post-Independence period, he also stopped having a say in the family finances:

My husband used to work, and give me money for food and clothes. He did not have time to take me out for shopping, so I would not mind anyway and I would save the money. That's how I made money then. After we bought the house, I had so much money I bought all the furniture. So, what I am trying to say is this: I was able to do what I wanted to do. (Nilay, 16 December 2016, Istanbul)

Nilay's words indicate that she was expected to spend for "the domestic budget" from what her husband gave her. Although she claims that she was free to do what she wanted to do, still, she ended up spending "her money" for the household. All this changed after Nilay's migration. At the time of our interview, Nilay's household consisted of her husband, son, daughter-in-law and grandson. Nilay's husband made a very small salary which he kept to himself. Nilay sent all her salary to her daughter-in-law, and instructed her on the household expenditures, despite the presence of both her husband and son as men in the household.

Indeed, most remittances, and spending instructions and responsibilities circulate between mothers and daughters-in-law. For example, Nermin's mother-in-law used to work as a manager at a honey factory in Soviet Georgia when Nermin married into the

family. She explained that it was her mother-in-law and her husband who put her through university, but after Georgia's Independence the mother-in-law lost her job and the father-in-law, who was running a minibus line, had an accident. In her words:

Then one relative called my mother-in-law. They told her that they could find a job in Turkey for her. My mother-in-law worked for 3 years. She used to make 500 USD a month, but that was not enough neither for (my) children's tuition fee, nor for our loans and my husband still could not work. So I had to tell her to find me a job. My mother-in-law found me a job. When she worked in Turkey she used to send the money to me. To the woman. Because I am woman. I used to decide where to spend, for electricity, for school... But I came here. Now I send the money to my mother-in-law (Nermin, 6 June 2016, Istanbul)

Some migrant women sent remittances to their husbands or sons directly. This was particularly the case when there were no daughters-in-law, but some do it despite having daughters-in-law, as a way to preserve the man's position in relation to budgeting. Hatice was one such migrant: "Now my son makes money, but very little. His wife asks money from him. But there, I have to help, I am the biggest contribution. I don't know what would happen if I did not send money, they would pick fights, they'd separate (Hatice, 25 December 2016)". On the other hand, she also admitted that she was the one who told her son how to spend the money over Skype.

Whether or not men put their hands on the remittances does not change the fact that remittances are for the "domestic budget". Not to be taking or controlling a wife's/mother's money is now as important as being able to provide for one's family and for masculine identities. So for many men, after they lost the ability to provide, the tacit

understanding between spouses was not to send money to the husband. Wives circumvented the possibility/necessity of sending money to their husbands by either directly buying commodities that men would need, such as cars and paying it like it was debt payment. In the rare cases that husbands received money directly from their wives for house expenses, migrant women were meticulous to specify that their husbands were “careful with their money”. In Zehra’s words: “He is very careful with the money. Not stingy but he can’t shell out the money that I am making. He says: ‘You work very hard, how can I spend it?’ Only cigarettes... that too not ready-made cigarettes. He buys tobacco. Then he rolls. So that my money does not go away, does not get burned away” (Zehra, 25 June 2016, Istanbul).

I suggest that men do not touch women’s wages because these wages are coded “female” and as such belong to the “domestic budget”. When money geared for the “domestic budget” exchanges hands between women, men’s position as breadwinner is not threatened as this money is not labelled as the main income, and women are not labelled as “breadwinners”. Furthermore, the wages are generated through domestic labour, which, even though it brings substantive wages in this case, is female coded “non-productive” work. This supports the socialist feminist stand on the importance of gender ideologies which render men and women’s labour and wages noncomparable (see *chapter two*). This is a key factor in rendering women’s labour devalued, and thus most profitable for capital. In Georgian families, we see that women are not considered to be the “breadwinners”, regardless of the amount of labour that they exert in the labour market and the amount of wages that they generate and more importantly, notwithstanding the fact that in most cases in this study, migrant women’s remittances are the only wages that Georgian households survive on.



#### 5.4.2. How To Be A Transnational Family: Skype-Er Grandma

*The good is, we send money, they live comfortably, they pay for electricity, for gas, for internet, whatever they want. The bad is that I send money but they spend it without me, I am here. I send and send but I don't get to share, I don't get to see. (Merve, 19 June 2016, Istanbul )*

Merve highlights one of the key strains that unravel among transnational families: the expansion and fulfillment of social reproductive duties towards one's family across borders at the expense of physical absence. Navigating transnational connection is another aspect of Georgian migrant women's unpaid social reproductive work. Migrant women in this study keep their (patrilocal) families together and maintain their positions in these families through a transnational presence. This presence includes travels, sending remittances and gifts, and staying virtually connected over the phone or, in most cases, over the internet.

Ever-changing technology has been shown to alter the rhythms and nature of family connections and transnational mothering. Particularly important in deciphering what circulates in the transnational social spaces is the concept of "simultaneity" which is increasingly enabled by technological advancements (Levitt & Schiller, 2004).

Simultaneity involves living lives that incorporate daily activities, routines, and institutions located both in a destination country and transnationally (Levitt and Schiller, 2004). Technological improvements (causing time and space compression) alter access to networks and power relations, the circulation of ideas, practices and resources.

Transnational family members stay as families through daily practices which are mediated by communication technologies, such as phone calls, text messages or posts onto social networks sites (Madianou, 2017).

The ways in which families stay in touch with each other and continue being a family, and the workings of transnational families particularly in the case of mothers' migration, have received significant scholarly attention. I have summarized the key studies and themes on this subject at the beginning of this chapter. In relation to women's migration, most scholarship focuses on the unidirectional flow of care and transnational motherhood (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1997; Parrenas, 2005; Lutz, 2011). However, some scholars recognize that care among transnational family members circulates – albeit in asymmetrical proportions and forms (Baldassar and Merla, 2014). Baldassar and Merla (2014) conceptualize this circularity in the realm of individuals, objects, ideas and shared imagination, which represent care. More specifically, the circulation of care is comprised of obligations and expectations which are governed by rules applicable both to the present and future. In other words, in (transnational) families, members negotiate and monitor the granting and withholding of care under unequal power relations and expectations, in order to reciprocate them in the due course of time. In either case, meanings attached to transnational families as well as transnational motherhood are being defined and redefined in relation to gender and class ideologies and practices, particularly under the influence of technological developments.

As a result of migration, loyalties and emotional attachments take new forms and intensities and new routines of intimacy and familiarity are established transnationally (Lutz, 2011). In particular, migrant women's engagement with their families has been documented to be “thick”, a phenomenon which brings negative as well as positive consequences. For example, Madianou (2017), in her digital ethnography of Filipina migrant mothers and their children, shows that transnational mothering may become more rewarding through the use of webcams which enable synchronous and visually rich

communication, while also enabling a feeling of being recognized as mothers.

Furthermore, some mothers and children feel more emotionally secure and supported, and value social and mobile media because they offer a meaningful way of communication which is also conducive for power negotiations. The downsides of being connected all the time in an intense manner are that migrant women feel an obligation to be continuously available emotionally and financially, which may also increase conflict among family members because of mutual surveillance attempts.

Again, in the case of Filipina migrants, Barber (2010) contends that the use of cellular phone may be a mixed blessing. On the one hand, Filipina migrants enjoy the increased communication with their families which facilitates their continued and intensified (as opposed to the times when there were no cellular phones) emotional involvement with their families which, in turn also helps ease feelings of guilt. On the other hand, their social reproductive work expands through their work day. They are available to their families and sometimes to their extreme/unreasonable demands around the clock. Considering that more often than not these migrants are labourers in the domestic sector, their paid and unpaid social reproductive work overlap, thus creating a simultaneous double shift (Barber, 2010).

Georgian migrant women in this study keep up with their transnational family relationships and social reproductive duties by alternating and trying to strike a rhythm between physical proximities and transnational simultaneities, that is by means of physical travel, sending and overseeing remittances, and gifts, and through regular internet connection. They travel to Georgia regularly with changing frequencies between every three months to once a year, to stay there one or two weeks at a time. On a few

occasions family members are brought to Turkey for short stays. More importantly, migrant women make use of technology to stay in touch with their families. In line with the above literature, I suggest that care work is multi-directional – although not on equal terms – as women’s accounts show, the importance of family connection in their lives is a priority. Migrant women’s fulfillment of gendered obligations as mothers, mothers-in-law, and grandmothers is greatly facilitated by the use of technology. Their interactions are not only meaningful in the present, but also geared to secure their gendered position in the future, usually as mothers-in-law. As I will show in the rest of this section, most migrant women are in regular, sometimes always, in communication with their family members. They communicate their love, oversee the “domestic budget”, and provide guidance on their family members’ emotional and relationship states as part of their gendered position in their families. Additionally, migrant women also use this forum to establish and maintain their virtue transnationally by reporting on their daily whereabouts and employment conditions. They allow being surveilled by their family members for this purpose.

Almost all migrant women had smart phones, iPads, and/or access to a computer at their employer’s. Some paid for internet from their own pocket although most used the Wi-Fi that their employers provide for them. The most frequently used programs were “Skype”, “Facebook Messenger”, and sometimes “Viber”. The frequency of communication depended on the employer, some employers did not mind them talking throughout the day and actually made it easy for the employees by setting up Wi-Fi and/or giving them the devices. A few employers restricted this talk only to the evenings. Most participants reported that they talked with their daughters, sons,

daughters-in-law and grandchildren regularly, once a day on average, if they were not connected all day. Those who were connected throughout the day over the internet knew each other's routines and daily schedules. Nimet, for example, talked with her family, including her grandchild, everyday: "If I don't call in the morning my daughter-in-law will call, where are you? What happened? We are waiting for your call. Like that, they are used to it (Nimet, 6 June 2016, Istanbul)".

There was more traffic of calls on day offs. On Sundays, one could see at least one or two women from each table at the Wrinklet restaurant talking to their family members. It is on such a Sunday that I learned what migrant women call themselves: "Skype-er grandma" grandma" (*Skype-che babanne*<sup>9</sup>). They talked to their grandchildren and their grandchildren recognized them through the screen.

Most migrant women saw simultaneous connection as a way to survive the separation as well as a way to continue to be a family. On that topic, some saw it as a fair replacement of actual relations while others complained that the distance formed between them and their children –or their husbands can't be reconciled. One example was Maya. She has two adult daughters who live together. Each daughter also has children of their own. Maya sends all her salary to them. Maya's employer is an older woman who does not have Wi-Fi at home. Moreover, she does not allow Maya to call her family from the home phone. This, along with the physical distance, affected Maya's feelings and expressions of love:

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<sup>9</sup> *Babaanne*: paternal grandmother

Once a week the daughter of the boss brings the computer so I can talk with my daughters. I miss them a lot. There is physical distance, yes, but also once you are there (in Georgia) there is less hugging too. Yes, love is there, but it is not the same anymore, because you don't spend time together anymore, you don't hug anymore. (Ilknur, 12 June 2016, Istanbul)

Some migrant women did not feel any change in their relationship with their families irrespective of an online connection. Here is an exchange between Narin and Zehra. They both came to Turkey when internet connection was not so prevalent in Turkey or Georgia. They told me that they had to buy telephone cards for a number of years in order to call their families in Georgia. At the time of our interview, both had access to smart phones and Wi-Fi connection at home:

Zehra: To see them through the internet, skype, is actually worse for me. When I see them I feel upset. Whenever I want I call them, or whenever they want, they call me. Not every day, that will be costly. Once or twice a month. There is no need for me to call them online. Then I get upset. No need at all.

Narin: It is exactly the opposite for me. My love became bigger. Me and my son, we grew closer. Say now, I call my son over the internet, I go like "I love you, - gibberish-". He says "don't treat me like a child, I am a grown man now". My love grew. Nothing changed.

Zehra: Yes, nothing changed. (15 June 2016, Istanbul)

As explained in the previous section, Georgian migrant women also used technology to direct remittance expenditures according to their position in the family. They further spoke about various topics with their in-laws, children or grandchildren, ranging from giving advice on good behaviour, to school work, and relationship statuses between couples. They exchanged news on community, neighbourhood, friends, and sometimes politics. Most often they reiterated the reason for them being in Turkey. They used simultaneity of connections in sharing the mundane as well as the extraordinary. Pelin gave an example: “Last month I sent them 3 pressure cookers. I really like pressure cookers, they cook fast but they are not available in Georgia. I showed them how to use it through Skype. Next are crepe pans.” (Pelin, 17 July 2016, Istanbul)

One final transnational gender role that migrant women performed transnationally was to sustain their (sexual) virtuousness. When talking about transnational travel, many migrants mentioned that they brought their husbands and/or children to Turkey to meet with their employers. This meeting served a double purpose: first was to establish physical contact with their families, and the second was to repel any claims that may suggest that they were engaging in non-marital sexual relations. They also took every opportunity to go to Georgia for this purpose. In the same vein, calling family over the internet was used to connect employers with families to prove that they were working in safe houses; that is, safe from dubious sexual acts. Many of them welcomed being under surveillance throughout the day by their family members either by being online all day, or providing detailed schedules of their daily tasks and outings. Sevda recalled how the male employer of the first family/household she worked for went to the trouble of showing Sevda how to use the internet, setting up for her a Facebook and Skype account:

“He was like a brother to me. My husband knew him through skype. My husband does not know Turkish but he’d tell my husband: “don’t worry, don’t be scared, she is with me. Our family is very good”” (Sevda, 25 June 2016, Istanbul). To establish and maintain their virtuousness was particularly important to Georgian migrant women who worked in Turkey. The reasons behind this particular situation will be discussed in the following section.

### **5.5. COMING TO TURKEY: A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD**

*Those who go to Germany or to America., they don’t come back for years, but they are not labelled as “whores”, but those who come here for three months are labelled as such* (Nilay, 6 June 2016, Istanbul).

In general, one of the major reasons migrant women recited for coming to Turkey was the geographical proximity between the two countries. Going to Europe or the US not only requires more financial resources (read debt), but they are also deemed to be far from Georgia. Even the farthest locale of origin in Georgia is a day away from Istanbul, and it is usually one (direct) bus ride. Furthermore, the visa regulations make this travel easy (see the *chapter four* on visa policies). Migrants who saw the earlier visa regime which lasted from 1990 until 2012 considered it an advantage, because “three months is not that long for family reunion”. In addition, the availability of “guest visa” and “work visa” options make Turkey an attractive destination. As I will show in the next chapter, many migrant women negotiated a rather flexible travel itinerary with their employers. Indeed, when comparing the visa situation of other countries, migrant women raised concern around being undocumented in Europe, the United States of America, and Israel,



although some of the participants had been or were undocumented at the time of interviews. Since going to Europe or the United States is much more expensive, once in those countries migrants become undocumented fast and therefore do not venture to leave that destination often and risk paying another round of travel and punitive fees. Many Georgian migrant women had relatives who were in such conditions in other countries. For instance, Melek considered her options before coming to Turkey:

My sister-in-law works in Italy. She told me to go there. I could not go there, I could not go to Greece either. I came to Turkey because it is close to home. From there I could not go back and forth home easily. Yes, I would make (more) money there, but I would not be able to hug my son. If I don't go home every now and then, I don't want that kind of money. What if something happens and you can't leave. That's what happens when you work in Italy. Same in Greece. Here at least we can go every six-seven-eight months, there they stay for years. My friend is in Greece. She has been there for 8 years, she has not left Greece once, she did not see her daughter. (Melek, 30 June 2016, Istanbul)

Staying close to their families in Georgia and being able to visit them “often” enough is one of the determining factors in women’s migration to Turkey.

As much as Turkey is an attractive destination, the majority of Georgian migrant women had to contend with their husbands, their families, their communities, and themselves when they chose to come to Turkey. In addition to the “dangers” presented by Turkish men, such as being kidnapped, raped and/or killed, Turkey was also seen as a country where migrant women could be derailed easily, that is by engaging in sexual encounters out of wedlock, or by becoming “kept women”. They had to challenge this

ideology forcefully which also meant that they had to extend additional effort to prove that they did not and would not be derailed. Although most women think that this perception with regards to Turkey has changed, still, families consider (sexual) safety as one of the most important factors in planning women's migration, and Turkey is still ranked at the bottom of the list of destination countries because it is seen as uniquely dangerous to women (Hoffman, 2015). Ugur who was in Turkey for 12 years, dared to come to Turkey after her husband's demise and at the height of negative assumptions about Georgian women in Turkey. Her words were repeated to me by many migrant women: "I used to read books, I used to watch films. I was very afraid of Turks, they looked like unruly. I saw them in the movies. But when I came here and I saw that they were different" (Ugur, 3 July 2016, Istanbul).

This perception rests on historical and contemporary facts and constructs as discussed in the previous chapter. Historically, many women knew –and recounted – the myth of Georgian princesses who killed themselves during a Muslim occupation (Iranian or Ottoman) so as not to be taken away by foreign men. This was still prevalent and recounted in contemporary Georgia, as I noticed while visiting a Church in Kutaisi, which is called the Church of "Red Rivers". I was told that rivers were called red as a result of the blood of princesses who killed themselves during such an occupation.

On the Turkish side, public perceptions of Russian and/or Caucasian women originate from the times of Ottoman Harem which consisted of Ottoman Sultans' mothers, wives, female relatives, concubines and servants and which was ruled by the Sultan's mother. Russian and Caucasian women were purportedly favoured in Harems.

This has been historically constructed and supported until today, with sexual attributes such as exceptional beauty and alluring or dangerous sexuality associated with women of such ethnic backgrounds (Bloch, 2017). Turkey's contemporary reputation with regards to sexual encounters, trafficking and sex work is not baseless. In the early 1990s, as women from ex-Soviet countries started to come to Turkey, a discourse of "Natasha" swept the whole country. Soon media outlets were full of stories about Turkish men who divorced their wives in order to marry the gorgeous Russian – and other ex-Soviet Union women – or even more so, that men were taking these women as mistresses. In the Turkish public imagination these women were more liberal in their sexual encounters in that they could have sex outside of marriage rituals, or that they were after fun not marriage. In addition, especially since the 1980s onward traffickers of "white" women brought countless Russian, Ukrainian, and Moldovan women to Turkey for prostitution, or in transit to Europe and North America. "Natasha" then became a discursive symbol for women who looked Russian or ex-Soviet countrywoman and who might be a prostitute (Hacaoglu, 2002). Some ex-Soviet women also reportedly actively sought to be "kept women" because this status brought them economic and legal stability (indirectly via marrying the married men's acquaintances in arranged fake marriages), as well as romance and a commitment to women's families on the part of men (Bloch, 2017). Deciding to come to Turkey was a thus a brave decision taken by migrant women who wanted to keep virtuousness as part of their womanhood. It meant employing several strategies before, and after migration.

To start with, Georgian migrant women in this study whose husbands were alive reported that they sought their husband's permission for working and for migrating. This is in line with findings from Hoffman's (2014) study which investigated the effects

of Georgian gender norms on women's migration. Hoffman (2014) showed that Georgian migrant women secured their husbands' permission before their migration. Similarly, respondents in my study were in agreement that women needed their husband's permission to work, let alone to come to Turkey. Those whose husbands had passed away mentioned that if their husbands had been alive they would not have been able to come to Turkey. All married women reported that their husbands did not want them to go to Turkey. Indeed, it was easier for women to get permission to go to Europe, North America or Israel for work. Zerrin's comments sum it up:

Uuu, my husband did not want me to go. Before, it was a shame for a Georgian (woman) to come to Turkey. They (husbands) always said no. If you went to Germany it was much easier for them to give permission. Because others would think that way, even though the husband may know that it is not like that in Turkey (Zerrin, 14 January 2017, Istanbul).

Those who secured permission from their husbands did so with great difficulty. Some women had to insist for months on end. Sevda for example, begged her husband and in-laws for almost a year before she was let go, reminding them of her good reputation and promising them that her/their reputation would never be ruined. Ada, on the other hand, took a harder stand:

I decided in one day, I left for Turkey the next. You know what my husband said: "if you leave for Turkey now I will divorce you". I said "OK. Let's get a divorce. We have two doors in our house. You may leave through whichever one you want." He said: "are you kicking me out?" Hahahhaa. Then he went to his big brother for advice. The brother said that I was doing the right thing. Is there any other solution? (Ada, 18 December 2016, Istanbul)

Esra never told her husband until she was already on the bus, on her way to Turkey:

He did not want me to come here. I did not even ask him. Because I saw there was a lot of debt. If I had asked he would not have let me. So I just took off. He called me in the morning, telling me to do something in the bank, I said “I can’t, I am in the bus”. He did not talk to me for two years. Now he does, because I am such a good woman – he tells me that. (Esra, 3 July 2016, Istanbul)

Whether with their husband’s permission or not, migrant women were quite apprehensive during their first trip to Turkey. Mujde, who came to Turkey in 2007 at the age of 39 recounted the following breathlessly and with teary eyes. Her relative was working in Turkey at that time and had pre-arranged her transportation through a recruitment office<sup>10</sup>:

Then we started the road. But all these things that crossed my mind all the way “How did I leave my family, how did I leave my nine-month old grandchild.” They brought us to the bus station first. We were nine women. A man came. He looked at us, examined us. He was looking for a woman to take care of his mother. Then he said “I want this, I am taking this”. Out of nine, he picked me. He took my luggage from my hand. Then we walked a bit together. Then I saw his car. I put my luggage in the back. Then he opened the front door. I told him I would not sit there. I sat in the back, but how did I sit there? In such a small position, so that he does not see me (through the mirror). I only knew a few words: “I have husband, family, children (in Turkish)”. I only knew these, I had memorized these. So that he does not see me in a bad way. So that he does not

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<sup>10</sup> There are official and unofficial recruitment agencies in Turkey who connect migrant women to potential employers for a commission.

make advances to me. I can't remember how we made it to the house... he did not do anything to me, but the ride was horrible. Then, it was not a bad family after all. We went there, the mother was an old lady, she was a good aunt. (Mujde, 5 June 2016, Istanbul)

Georgian migrant women felt an additional pressure of contradicting Georgian gender ideologies which depict women's roles as docile and devoted to physical and emotional care of their families because they were specifically coming to Turkey as opposed to going to European or North American destinations. As this section shows migrant women challenged several cultural norms at once, while fulfilling their overarching social reproductive role in the maintenance and continuation of their families and in the making and overseeing of the family's domestic budget. They physically separated from their households and in this context, they risked their reputation. However, with time, with the use of transnational connections and technology, they extended additional effort to prove their virtues, and to protect their positions in their families. In other words, they redefined mostly to restate how to be a Georgian woman by persistently confirming to Georgian social reproductive strategies and the cultural scripts that inform these strategies.

## **5.6. CONCLUSION**

Feminist political economy scholars have been committed to analyze the relationship between production relations and the sustenance and reproduction of social relations, the latter conceptualized as social reproduction. They have highlighted the ways and degrees in which social reproduction relations are becoming encompassed, transformed, and exploited under the conditions of capitalist production relations. In

addition, they have underscored the growing tension on families' social reproductive strategies as capitalism becomes detrimental to such strategies as it relies on them at increasing levels (Bakker & Gill, 2019). Relatedly, this chapter is an account of how social reproductive work, whether mental, physical or emotional, is conditioned in response to capitalist production relations. Earlier social feminist studies problematized how the rhythms and parameters of domestic labour respond to changes in a mode of production. For instance, in an earlier study, Luxton (1980) showed that domestic labour is similar to industrial labour with labour processing times and products where the latter two are arranged around waged labour schedules. She further showed that labour processes respond to technological changes and social reproductive work spreads across different sites based on the work and wage schedules of household members. Similarly, under contemporary capitalism, Georgian migrant women's social reproductive work, including its parameters, content and processes, have changed. These changes can be ascertained from the transnational forms and rhythms of participants' expansion of social reproductive labour. In tandem, by following material and ideological features, this chapter has shed light on migrant women's efforts in securing the maintenance of particular familial social structures as part of their social reproductive work. It further listed migrant women's choices among (constricted) material, and ideological options which have become available to them in pursuit of their livelihood under emerging capitalist relations in Georgia. These choices have been shown to ultimately benefit the reproduction of capitalism at local, regional, and global levels, in present and in the imagined near future.

The following chapter focuses on Georgian migrant women's commodified social reproductive labour, that is, the labour power that they exchange as domestic labourers

for a wage in Turkish homes. Drawing from Marxist concepts of labour, labour power, surplus value extraction, and labour processes, (Marx, 1867/1990) it analyses the content, parameters, conditions, struggles, and the accompanying discursive frames that surround the sale of domestic labour power. This final chapter examines the attempts by employers to further devalorize women's social reproductive labour and outlines migrant women's resistance and strategies of negotiations in response. In line with this study's purpose, the employer-employee relationships in Turkish homes are explored in relation to the conditioning effects of contemporary capitalism.



## CHAPTER 6: SALE OF SOCIAL REPRODUCTIVE LABOUR POWER



A Sunday afternoon at the restaurant 'Wrinklet'.

### 6.1. INTRODUCTION

*Now, I am not living my own life. I am living somebody else's life. I work like a robot.*

*Their life became my life (Ennur; August 27, 2016, Istanbul)*

Georgian migrant women are in Turkey to sell their labour power. As part of the global reorganization, reallocation, and redistribution of social reproductive labour, they exchange their social reproductive labour for wages in destination countries. In tandem with feminist political economy theorists' arguments, the previous chapter has shown a number of ways in which migrant women's work in the social reproductive realm contributes to capital accumulation, and to the maintenance and reproduction of capitalist social relations. More specifically, Georgian migrant women's remittances sustain and

socially reproduce a cheap labour force in Georgia, augment the Georgian state's national budget, while at the same time financing global capital by servicing overpriced debt repayments. *Chapter five* has further shown how a gendered division of labour which simultaneously facilitates the extraction of unpaid labour power and devalorizes women's work is actively constructed and reproduced in family and kin relations, in labour markets, and through state policies.

This chapter markedly changes focus and problematizes the extraction of unpaid surplus value from Georgian women's commodified social reproductive labour power. In its commodified form, such labour power is further devalorized under general working conditions which surround the employer-employee relationship. The literature points to two specific ways in which surplus value is extracted from the waged social reproductive labour of migrant women labourers. The former is a devalorization process dependent on migrant women's particular social location in terms of race, ethnicity, and migration status in local and global labour markets. The latter occurs in the work place, that is, in the employers' homes, and involves surplus value extraction during the labour process. In other words, the employers' home is where migrant domestic labourers come into direct confrontation with their employers under capitalist class relations. It is the through contestations over the labour process, work, and living conditions that the extraction of surplus value is achieved. The surplus value is not a direct profit to be used by the employers of migrant women in a conventional accumulation of capital. Rather, Turkish employers economize by hiring racialized immigrant women in a more or less unregulated fashion instead of Turkish domestic labourers. Moreover, the round-the-clock

presence of migrant women in employers' homes exponentially increases the prospects and proportions of unpaid labour power available to the employer.

In line with contemporary class analysis framework (Kalb, 2015) which was outlined in *chapter two*, I take the class relations between the employers and employees to be a contestation over access to resources, whether they be of production or social reproduction. Therefore, although the employers do not gain a direct profit, the surplus labour power and monetary funds that they save are plausibly used to better their families' quality of life, financial, and emotional welfare, their children's educational achievement, and to uplift and showcase their class status in Turkish society. Moreover, although the daily confrontations between employers and domestic workers may be indirectly tied to profit, women migrants (and all migrants in general) benefit global economic structures in more evident ways. Ultimately, the outsourcing of social reproductive work on the part of families is also a reflection of neoliberal economic policies, which are adopted by nation states in their attempt to assign social reproduction responsibilities to families (see *chapter two, section 2.2.1*.) These neoliberal economic policies themselves are a reflection of shifting capitalist aims. Their impacts on migrant and non-migrant women, families, communities, and the accompanying differentiating normative orders have been thoroughly documented by feminist political economy scholars (Fraser, 2017, and others in *chapter two, section 2.2.1*). Finally, migrants' transnational engagements significantly and directly contribute to global capital accumulation by way of their purchases from migration industries which largely consist of legal or illegal travel companies (Mahler, 1995), recruitment agencies (Constable, 2007), money transfer enterprises, and cultural consumption businesses (Guarnizo, 2013).

The class analysis presented in this chapter is conducted in recognition of the overarching presence of capitalist social relations.

This chapter thus focuses on further layers of devalorization of women's social reproductive labour when it is commodified. It discusses the commodification of domestic labour in relation to wages, job description, labourer's time, labour processes, work and living conditions, as well as the position of the domestic labourer in the employer's household. In order to understand the nature and parameters of surplus labour extraction from the perspective of Georgian migrant domestic labourers, the first section of this chapter lays out the Marxist theory on labour power and surplus value, and the later work of 'Labour Process Theory' which expands the conceptualization and application of these concepts in response to changing capitalist relations. This is followed by an account of how surplus value extraction is interpreted and contested in the domain of social reproduction for Georgian migrant women in Istanbul. The next section focuses on the position of domestic labourers in labour markets and in employers' homes as well as the ideologies which expedite the articulation of racial, ethnic and class differentials which serve to secure surplus labour. The rest of the chapter identifies the points of opposition between the employers and employees in households including contracts, wage negotiations, and control over the performance of chores.

Through these discussions, the chapter shows how the social reproductive labour of migrant women is commodified under the conditioning effects of contemporary capitalism, historical and the current bilateral relations between Georgia and Turkey, and also the ideologies that inform the position of a domestic labourer. The chapter further suggests that albeit under exploitative arrangements, Georgian migrant women do exercise a certain degree of agency when selling their devalorized labour and negotiating

work and living conditions. It is in this context a paradox appears, that while contention around various aspects of domestic chores, work and living conditions indicate the extent and nature of surplus value extraction may be curtailed or reshaped, gains made by domestic labourers may be leading to further surplus labour extraction. Indeed, migrant women in this study have worked for “bad families” and “good families”, and have had “bad jobs”, and “good jobs”. In some cases, they put up with difficult conditions until they arranged a better job, while some negotiated better working conditions and oscillated between the positions of “being one of the family” and “being a human” with the ultimate goal of running the household like their “own home” which implies an indefinite expansion of their labour power.

## **6.2. LABOUR PROCESS THEORY**

The commodification of labour power is integral to capitalist production and social reproduction relations. As discussed in *chapter two*, labour power is the unique commodity which is the source of “surplus value”. Surplus value is unpaid labour, that is, it constitutes the value produced by the worker during labour process within the workday, but one which he or she is not compensated for through wages (Marx, 1867/1990, p. 220-226). The price of labourer (wage) rests on social relations which determine both the necessary labour time spent producing a particular good, and the time set aside for (social) reproduction of the labourer. Thus, surplus value is a function of time, and class struggle between the capitalist and labourer as conceptualized by Marx to be over surplus value, essentially represents a struggle over time. On the one hand, the capitalist aims to extract the maximum amount of unpaid labour from workers. This can be achieved by lengthening the work day, or by intensifying production (e.g. the output rate) during work

hours. On the other hand, the workers resist working more than the necessary labour time which suffice for production (of the particular good) and which compensate their own social reproduction (ibid, p 320-416). Indeed, Marx lists the introduction of relatively shorter workdays and workweeks as successful results of class struggle: “The establishment of a normal working day is the result of centuries of struggle between the capitalist and the worker (ibid, p. 382)”.

As discussed in the previous chapters, there have always been devalorization of (thus increase the rate of surplus value) the labour force by hierarchizing it along racial, ethnic and gender lines, as well as by rapid devalorization of production and occupation sectors under the more recent neoliberal regimes. However, it is the mechanisms of surplus value extraction, and more traditional class struggles around time and wages on labour intensive factory shop floors that have constituted the main focus of Marxist scholarship. Labour process theory has developed out of efforts to extend the application of Marxist insights on surplus value extraction into changing production processes, management techniques, and struggles and resistances. Over the past 50 years, the scope of work places and sectors, as well as the range of influential factors considered and examined in relation to surplus value extraction have expanded considerably. Before discussing these changes, I first present the original conceptions of labour, labour process, and their special place in the perpetuation of capitalism.

According to Marx, while labour is a process involving human forces facing nature’s forces for production, it is what sets humans apart from animals with its distinct corporal and creative characteristics (Marx, 1867/1990). “Labour power” is the use of labour itself and is thus conceptualized as a capacity, “the aggregate of [those] mental

and physical capabilities existing in a human being, which he exercises whenever he produces a use value of any description” (p. 119). The process through which labour power is used to change a “subject” of labour (for example raw materials) into a product with use value with the help of instruments is called the “labour process” (p.119). The labour power bought by the capitalist is used to produce a “particular use value, a specified article” (p. 127). When labour power is sold to the capitalist who already owns the “subjects” of labour as well as the instruments, the labourer loses control of the process’s direction and end result, although the general character of the labour process stays substantially the same (p. 129-130).

In Marx’s words, every (free) labour process brings out “a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement” and a use value (1867/1990, p. 127). As this quote indicates, the labour process is a purposeful activity of engaging with the nature in terms of imagining, planning and execution of the process from beginning to the end. Control thus is of central importance in conceptualizing and theorizing surplus value extraction from labour power. When labour power is commodified, the worker loses control over each stage of the labour process from imagination to execution as well as whether the use product should have a use value or exchange value. To start with, a person is compelled to sell his/her labour power because s/he has been divorced from other means of sustenance (see discussion on primitive accumulation and dispossessions *in chapter three*). Once hired as workers, those who purchase labour power extract surplus value by intensifying or increasing worker productivity during the labour processes. While various methods are used to secure surplus value they also must be accompanied by discourses which conceal such

extraction. Control is further lost in relation to the fate of the product, where the labourer cannot decide whether to utilize the product for use value or exchange value.

This account shows the significance, conditions, and consequences of surplus value extraction in the context of capitalist system. Devalorization of labour takes place in multi-scaled institutional and cultural, and material and discursive contexts, both inside and outside of the work place (for example in violent dispossessions and accompanying laws). At individual level, the labourers are exploited, alienated, and disciplined. A major focus in this area, which labour process theory concentrate on, has been the production processes. Labour process perspectives have become distinguished by their ability to place work activity within the total system of production (Thompson, 1993). Again, this scholarship draws from Marx, who finds the devalorization of labour during production process in: a) through expansion of work hours and, b) condensation of time that the labourer needs to produce the product (Marx, 1867/1990, p. 220-226). The organizational and management techniques specifically designed to increase the amount of unpaid labour through the intensification of division of labour in factories have been the focus for labour process theory scholars who examined these issues both in terms of class struggle, and used them as a spring board to expand the understanding and mechanisms of surplus value extraction in other sectors and non-conventional (non-factory) production processes.

There are various forms of surplus extraction on the shop floors and workplaces, which is usually secured by exerting control over work hours, the speed and organization of work, requirement and evaluation of skills and compensation (Braverman, 1974;



Burawoy, 1979; Thompson, 1993). Building on Marx's theory of surplus extraction and critique of capitalism, in *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, Braverman (1974) shows that the implementation of technology to production along with scientific management techniques resulted in fragmentation and routinization of skills required in the labour process while increasing the number and quality of output. These methods thus disintegrated skills and deskilled labourers, a phenomenon he called the degradation of labour. Consequently, not only surplus value extracted through the labour process itself increased but also by extension, the labour force in general, became more amenable for (further) surplus value extraction.

Opposition to the extraction of surplus value is regarded as a key component in organized collective "class struggle". Marx himself pays special attention to the classical battles at the point of production over working hours and wages, which reinstate some power to the labourer but which should be ultimately attuned to demolishing the wage system. Building on Marx's critique of the capitalist labour processes, labour process theory has incorporated the changes in production and accompanying mechanisms of control and opposition, from industrial capitalism to our current global, neoliberal, flexible production. In this context, control, autonomy, agency and resistance have been key concepts and their conceptualizations reflect the changes not only in capitalism but also in social theory from Marxism to materialism, neo-Marxism, and post-structuralism/post-modernism (Smith, 2016). Historically in labour process perspectives, again, Braverman (1974) built his pioneering scholarship on the premise that the general organization of labour processes in the workplace and control over labour are conditioned by the larger economic imperative, that is, the extraction of surplus labour. Braverman (1974) problematized the wider organization of capitalist production in the 1970s, its

occupational and class structures while pointing out the degradation of work which consists of the separation of the conceptual and manual components of work. In this context, as management takes control over the judgement, knowledge and conceptual aspects of skills and work, workers lose control, autonomy and power over the labour process resulting in reduced levels of satisfaction. Burawoy, (1979) turned attention to “consent”, rather than coercion but also in conjunction with it, the way surplus value is secured and appropriated. He showed that workers are active agents in the resistance to and reproduction of capitalist social relations, the latter because consent aligns employees’ and employers’ aims while employees also find pride and satisfaction in their work. Looking at a different line of work, Tinker (2002) analyzed the ways in which teachers’ labour processes, as well as their relationship to the products of their labour, changed under the education systems of the US and UK. He asserted that the introduction of various Taylorite techniques such as “merit-based pay” and “digitalized delivery systems” (p. 265) served to separate the “head from hand” (ibid) indicating a managerial seizing of control and a general degradation of work. He underlined the necessity of including other sites of class struggle in the context of direct exploitation in the workplace. Later scholarship highlighted the determining effects of national labour markets, orders and regulations, the informalization of work, and general precariousness of the working class as additional factors in understanding the levels and nature of control and resistance (Mezzadri, 2019). Following the changes in capitalism and weakened collective labour struggles and movements, conceptualizations of resistance or struggle versus consent have been expanding to embrace non-traditional collectives and sites outside of production points, as well as non-collective resistances (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999). Scott (1989), for instance, lists various “everyday forms of resistance” in his

studies of peasants. He argues that, even though they are short of being part of any collective or formal organization, or direct revolutionary consequences, individual actions such as foot-dragging, desertion, pilfering, and tax evasion, as well as gossip and slander, constitute material and symbolic (ideological) resistance. These actions, usually committed anonymously and discreetly, should be treated as “ordinary means of class struggle” because they are designed and conducted to fend off attempts of systematic appropriation by dominant classes and/or the state (Scott, 1989, p. 34)

Again, on this point of adapting a larger framework to include sources of control and sites of confrontation, a different thread of scholarship which make use of Foucauldian power, discipline, and daily mundane resistances has also been flourishing (Constable, 2007; Freeman, 2000; Ong, 2010). Control and resistance strategies of female workforce have received attention in this thread, particularly in the context of increased labour force participation of women in gendered labour markets. As an illustration, Ong’s early ethnography (2010, original publication date 1987) documented the experiences of women workers in Malaysia’s Free Trade Zone, Japanese owned electronic factories. Steering away from labour process theory insights, Ong adopted a Foucauldian understanding of power and discipline to explain the resistance strategies of women workers against Taylorite and other management and surveillance techniques on the shop floor, under the conditioning effects of industrial capitalism, as well as corporate, national, and political cultural discourses, and impositions. These impositions ranged from families’ control over women’s salaries and bodies, to state agencies which significantly curtailed the establishment and activities of labour unions. Malay women proletariat used “subterranean resistance” (p.211) informed by their (newly constructed)

gendered subjectivities, which alternated between individual and collective, and indirect and direct forms of resistance. Among them were traditional forms of resistance such as taking unannounced breaks, absenteeism, and tempering with factory equipment. Gendered resistance was found in behaviours of crying (to avoid being disciplined), starting rumors of sexual and/or abusive misconduct about (male) foremen, and ultimately having “spirit possession episodes” (p. 220) on the shop floor. Ong concluded that these daily conflicts are a reflection of new subjectivities and daily countertactics, which do not (and will not) oppose capitalism or the state.

Going back to labour process theory, Ackroyd and Thompson (1999) introduced the perspective of “organizational misbehaviour”. Organizational misbehaviour refers to “anything you do at work you are not supposed to do” and more specifically to contestation over matters “related to time, work, product and identity” (p. 25). A broad view of misbehaviour includes (linguistic) dissent and patterns of resistance which imply intentional and purposeful action, thoughts and identity on the part of the employee in opposition to the power of employer or superior, with the twin aims of claiming control and establishing dignity (Karlsson, 2011). These behaviours thus range from more traditionally recognized activities such as absenteeism, soldiering<sup>11</sup> and sabotaging machinery to other oppositional activities such as withdrawing engagement, silent protests and cynicism (dissent). These employee “misbehaviours” are treated to be conceptually different from Marxist understanding of “resistance” in that they are not collective, formal or transformative but still carry an imminent potential to evolve as

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<sup>11</sup> Slowing the pace of work

such. In fact, it has been shown that collective yet non-unionized protests like swift walk-outs from work, may form in response to organizational changes in historically established local production plants under particular local and cultural contexts characterized with tight kinship ties (Barber, 1990). Despite being criticized by some because it will not bring any cost or change to the system (Contu, 2008), still conceptualizing these individualistic oppositional behaviours as resistance that may morph into collective action opens up a theoretical space in which a domestic labourer's oppositional activities can be interpreted. This leads us to locate domestic migrant women's resistance in and outside of households within the larger "impetus" of the current capitalist political economy and uncover the obscuring discourses that lead to the further extraction of surplus value from them.

#### 6.1.2. Resistance In The Realm Of Social Reproduction

Feminist work has influenced the labour process theory literature in significant ways by challenging what "productive labour" is and showing the benefits of women's unpaid and paid social reproductive labour to capital accumulation, as discussed in the previous chapters. These contributions have helped extend conceptualizing certain movements which occur away from the point of production as "class struggle". Focusing on the effects of values generated by the so-called informal economy in the less developed world on global commodity chains and production networks, Mezzadri (2019) suggests that the blurring of the distinction between work and reproductive time for waged and non-waged labourers in the informal sector brings forward the possibility of

class struggle into the domain of “social reproduction”. Social reproduction theorists, likewise, contend that the struggles over water and land evictions across the world constitute different kinds of struggles against capital, although they are not battles over wages, labour processes, or working conditions (Bhattacharya, 2017). Further incorporation of waged and unwaged social reproduction workers into class-based oppositional practices in the realm of social reproduction are household budgeting and calibrating expenses, and activities attached to food production-provision and cost of living (Mohandesi & Teitelman, 2017) which may become more politically charged when they lead to boycotts. In Canada, in pursuit of conceptualizing the working class consisting of waged workers and their waged and non-waged predominantly female family members, Bradbury reminds us the support provided by housewives to male dominated union led strikes (1987). Housewives, in fact, were critical in organizing and sustaining of these strikes by fundraising, staffing picket lines, marching and in general supporting the (male) waged workers (Bradbury, 1987). Young, Wolkowitz and McCullagh (1981) argue that any collective action against the creation and imposition of sexual division of labour in societies and production relations, including the supporting government policies, should be considered political class struggle. There also is a long history of collectively organized domestic workers’ resistance across the world despite the prevailing work conditions of geographical scattering and individual isolation, as well as employment relations where there is no common employer to organize against. Domestic labourers have been found to oppose their employers and or states, individually, collectively or under larger struggles, as is the case with decolonial struggle, throughout the past 200 years in different nation states and continents (Boris & Nadasen, 2015).

More contemporary attempts, on local, national and transnational levels are also present, exemplified by overseas Filipina domestic labourers (Pratt, 2004).

Social reproduction theory scholarship, however, has been quiet on resistance in labour processes of social reproductive work and even more so on domestic labour processes than it is on documenting organized struggles among domestic labourers. One noteworthy exception is the conceptualization of “emotional labour” (Hochschild, 1983). In her book *The Managed Heart*, Hochschild explains how workers in the service sector - mostly women- lose control over the use and execution of their emotions along with their physical and mental labour to corporate control and wider capitalist relations. While she shows how detrimental commodification of emotional labour can be for workers, she also lists various conscious individual and collective resistance strategies around facial expressions, appearance, and work conditions. Following this, others built on this work by studying the commodified emotional labour of call centre workers (Brophy, 2017; Mulholland, 2004); care givers in the non-profit sector (Baines, 2016); and flight attendants (Taylor & Moore, 2014). In the same vein, Barber (2008b) reveals the multiple layers of subordinating forces which turn Filipina migrant domestic labourers docile as neoliberalism, lack of access of civic mobility and citizenship rights, and gender and class identities which spring from gender ideologies and employment/recruitment conditions. She contends that, even under such conditions that require deep levels of complicity, Filipina migrant labourers engage in acts of defiance, increasingly via use of cell phones, either collectively or individualistically (Barber, 2008b). This body of research documents informal individual and collective resistances irrespective of a union presence, such as sales sabotage, working to rule, work avoidance, emotional detachment,

absenteeism and quitting under antagonistic social relations of production in workplaces, and support the labour process theory's perspective that informal and individual resistances do have the potential of becoming collective.

The literature reports resistance in non-collective, informal ways by scholars of migrant domestic labourers, albeit conceptualized in a Foucauldian framework of power relations on micro structural level (i.e. in the household) that is, rather dissociated from capitalist macro structures. In her study on Filipina maids in Hong Kong, Constable (2007) lists several ways of self-disciplining under various agents such as employers, employment and recruitment agencies and governments. She suggests that migrant domestic labourers both actively resist against and comply with dominance, individually and collectively. Yeoh and Huang (2010) list behaviours performed by migrant domestic labourers in Singapore, such as verbally expressed ruptures, disengagement, and breaking contracts with or without the help of police, as struggles against power that is not assumed by a particular micro or macro structure. Lutz, in her ethnographic account of migrant domestic labourers in Europe, lists several behaviours such as negating specific orders, negotiating wages, and certain distancing strategies like selective cleaning practices as less about strategies of resistance than attempts at professionalization under household inequalities which are reflective of global and historical material inequalities (2011).

Labour process theory literature indicates that methods of surplus extraction from labourers change with the global and national regimes of capitalist production. This change is further shaped by the immediate work and organizational settings. Overall then,



resistance and consent techniques have been evolving with changes in political economy while securing and obscuring the extraction of surplus value during the labour process still remain the key for profit. Georgian migrant domestic labourers' work in private households in an unregulated sector shapes the organization and conditions of their labour processes. The antagonist capitalist working and exchange relationship takes place in Turkish homes. The confrontation between the domestic labourers and their employers do not correspond to conventional conceptualizations of class struggle, which itself is grounded on class consciousness, and ignited with political will at the point of production, or in the wider political sphere. As such then, this chapter follows Braverman's (1974) postulation and treats class struggle as happening in daily life and within the labour process to understand the daily work and living experiences of Georgian migrant women.

In the following sections, I demonstrate the dialectics of consent and resistance around autonomy, skills, and time between Turkish employers and Georgian migrant women. Georgian migrant women, in line with the above literature, concerted consent to and claim power over their labour power and domestic labour processes by appraising skill requirements and due compensation rates of their job, by resisting the separation of conceptual and practical parts of their duties, as well as by assessing their position in employer families. My findings suggest that a series of ideologies and migration related policies inform the consent and resistance choices of Georgian migrant women. These are related to the position of women and domestic labourers in Turkish and Georgian households and societies. One of the factors that increases Georgian domestic migrant labourers' agency in their resistance, even though migrant women are in a vulnerable

situation because of their migrant status, is the rather favourable visa regulations which are granted to Georgian nationals in Turkey as opposed to migrant domestic labourers of different nationalities such as Moldovans and Uzbeks who do not have visa free border crossing opportunities. Another fact is that all participants of this study are in possession of their passports, as opposed to reports in the literature about domestic labourers (Constable, 2007), or live-in caregivers (Arat-Koc, 1999; Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2004) whose passports are confiscated by their employers. Furthermore, there is an ongoing elevated demand for migrant live-in domestic labourers in Turkey. Finally, the longer migrant women work and live in Turkey the more experience they gain with employment offices, employers and Turkish cultural practices, and they have more access to networks consisting of other Georgian migrant women and sometimes other family members of the employers. Their strategies of resistance, or perhaps their “misbehaviour”, include pouting, talking back, having friends intervene, and ultimately changing employers. Gains resulting from a consolidation of resistance and consent usually mean more control over certain aspects of work and living conditions. These advances bring about ambiguous results. On the one hand, migrant labourers may expend even more labour power thus helping to reinforce and reproduce capitalist relations. On the other hand, they may lead the employers to compensate their employees in unconventional ways.

### **6.3. A MAID'S JOB**

*Nanny? You know sometimes, I get angry at myself. What am I doing? I went to school under such hard conditions, with children etc. now I became a child carer. Then I calm myself down, this is life. Sometimes you go up, sometimes you go down. Sometimes hard years will be followed by easy years. As a lawyer, I would not make this much money in Georgia. (Ada, 18 December 2016)*

Migrant women's interpretations with regards to their jobs show that they are aware of the larger capitalist economic imperatives which make them settle for working class, feminized jobs under a precarious migration status to sell their labour power. Migrant women's labour power is devalorized when they come to Turkey. As they crossed the border to Turkey their skills were not acknowledged in the wage relationship and they had to take a lesser valued, feminized job. Most respondents were university graduates and worked in jobs commensurate to their qualifications, especially those who worked in Soviet Georgia, but they could not find such jobs; in Georgia because of the labour market features (*see chapter three*) or in Turkey because their degrees were not recognized. In this context, they identified the factors which devalorized their labour power as their ethnicity and migrant status. During our many conversations about ethnic based differences between wages, most women workers reported that they did not know other ethnic domestic workers' salaries except that of Turkish cleaners or care givers. Their comments drove to the heart of extraction of surplus value from them by virtue of them being migrant women. The following quote by a Georgian migrant woman illustrates this point:

But workers like us, we work for cheap as compared to Turkish women, that's why they (employers) want us. We stay overnight, out of necessity of course. On the one hand this may be a big opportunity for us but on the other, it may also mean that we work for cheaper. I have some Turkish friends; they get angry at us. They say you work for cheap, it creates problem for us they say. They can't stay but they make more money than us. They make 120 to 150 TL (40 USD) per day. I stay with them, I am like one of the family. They give me 750 dollars plus 50 TL (15 USD) for the day off (Anonymous participant, 1 June 2016, Istanbul).

These political economic imperatives, along with migration policies frame how migrant women negotiate the terms and parameters of their job and their consent and resistance devices at work. Georgian migrant women accept that being a maid signifies a fall for them but they are not embarrassed by their jobs because it is important to be able to make money in an honourable way, that is by putting in the due amount of labour and by not providing sexual favours to employers or others. They are in an active process of defining a job which they are proud of due to their knowledge and accomplishments, where they are treated and respected as a "human being" with the ultimate goal of "being comfortable as in one's home", which usually means being in charge of the chores and their time just like the "woman of the house". This claim to dignity in the context of the commodification of social reproductive labour takes place under the historical forms and discourses of bonded labour and family and kinship rhetoric which mask the extraction of surplus value. Consequently, the worker's position in an employer's household is deliberated upon as part of the working conditions and is subject to contestation.

### 6.3.1. Position In The House: Human Being Or Woman Of The House?

*10-15 years ago we used to watch the series, "slave Isaura". They showed it in our country, everybody watched it. She used to work like a domestic maid, she used to do everything. I would think to myself, ay, how would they do that? I never thought that I would do this job. But a time came that I had to. It was difficult in the beginning. But thank God, things were easy for me. (Nermin, 6 June 2016)*

This is how Nermin, who works in a household where she feels at home, describes one aspect of her job. She compares her work to that depicted in the series called *Escrava Isaura* (Slave Isaura) (1976) shown in Turkey and Georgia in the 1980s. In parallel, quite a few respondents compare their lives to being in prison pointing to the circumstances of their working conditions within the four walls of their employers' house, facilitating people's lives other than their families, as well as their economic conditions where their family is dependent on their income.

Scholarly work on the commodification of domestic labour allude to the parallels between slavery and the current employment relations of domestic labourers in households. Drawing from liberal Western political philosophy Anderson (2000) argues that the domestic labourer sells her personhood rather than her labour power (p. 3). She further highlights the racialized personhood construction of the domestic labourer as "dirty" servant or cleaner, which in turn elevates the class status of the employer family (Anderson, 2000). Lutz (2011) ties the presence of foreign women as domestic labourers in European homes to the conditions of slavery; an imposition and upkeep of the social structural dominance by the bourgeois class in the early 1800s which

is represented and re-glossed under the rubric of “modernity” and “professionalization” in contemporary times. Teeple Hopkins (2017), shows that current domestic worker employment relations in North America are historically rooted in domestic slavery, while Constable (2007) demonstrates that for live-in domestic labourers control is not only on the product of worker’s labour but also on her body, time, personality, voice and emotions, and that these oppressive practices are rooted in forms of discipline found in the historical Chinese slavery system. In the latter case the historically reconstructed attributions of women slaves and maids becomes the discursive gloss which employers impose and employees look up to.

Labour process theory perspectives recognize appeals to professional values, creativity, career, good will or trust to be quite suitable methods of translating the capacity of skilled and professional workers into labour effort and value (Smith, 2016). Being treated as “one of the family” is one such contemporary discourse used to mask material and symbolic inequalities, and the extraction of surplus value from domestic workers’ labour power. As Anderson (2000) alludes, this discourse facilitates the increased expectation about the amount of unpaid physical and emotional labour expended by the employee, and increased disciplinary provisions over employees while also decreasing the workers’ ability to negotiate a higher salary and/or better working conditions since such demands would be seen as an insult to the employer family and evidence of the worker’s money grubbing attitude. The professionalization of domestic work, on the other hand, in combination with the regularization for migration status of migrant domestic workers, may mitigate some slave-like conditions. Professionalization thus may have positive impacts by limiting the working hours, by providing access to social insurance and pension plans, as well as by limiting the power of individual

employers over employees (Perez & Stallaert, 2016). Attempts at professionalization, however, still do not address the problems behind the remuneration of such work; the lower wages paid to racialized migrants, and the personal relations between employers and employees (Perez & Stallaert, 2016). Moreover, as shown by Barber (2014), professionalization as scripted by employment agents may also lead to a development of a general class, gender and ethnicity-based performed subordination on the part of migrant domestic workers.

Slavery, professionalization, and being one of the family or household, have also been problematized in the literature with regards to Turkish domestic labourers. Ozbay (1999) reports that there used to be three types of domestic workers deployed in Ottoman households: slaves, *evlatliks*<sup>12</sup> and waged servants. After slavery's abolishment at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, the number of live-in servants as well as that of *evlatliks* increased. The *evlatlik system* was an institutionalized form of bonded labourers, unwritten but mutually understood with practiced obligations on each side. Young girls from rural and poorer backgrounds would be given to middle class families for a sum of money. It was expected that the girl would provide unpaid domestic labour to the family until she was married off by the family and/or until her death. *Evlalik's* position in the family was usually higher than that of the paid servant but being neither a slave nor adopted children, they were also often treated as both (Ozbay, 1999). Ozbay also discusses how the women of the household, whose domestic labour was appropriated, were positioned in relation to the household: as 'in or out of household'. She includes the *evlatliks*, maids, and daughters-in-law in her analysis to reveal that depending on the family, *evlatliks* could become

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<sup>12</sup> A title close to the definition of "foster child"

women “within household”, which would entitle them to similar treatment as a daughter in emotional and even financial considerations, whereas maids would never be so treated. The *evlatlik system* was banned in 1967, although it has not stopped in practice (Togrul, 2006). The number of these girls in such contexts and situations is not known, as they are mostly invisible to conventional economic statistics and because of their ambiguous status in the family: they may be treated as one of the family, in that they may be provided with some education, a dowry, sometimes and inheritance, and/or life-long protection depending on the good will of the family, while still lacking the legal protection which family members would automatically receive and with no outlet for social mobility by way of education or material accumulation (Togrul, 2006).

Even though this practice has not disappeared completely, the outlawing of this practice, along with the rural to urban population movements that occurred in Turkey in 1960s and 70s, has resulted in the emergence of new forms and markets for domestic labourers. The market for domestic workers in urban centres consists of squatters’, or janitors’ (or doorkeepers’, Ozyegin, 2001) wives, who clean houses, or sometimes take care of children, only during the day because of their family responsibilities (Ozyegin, 2001). According to Ozyegin (2001), this market is internally regulated, where daily stipends are usually agreed upon by employers and employees according to the current market rates. Ozyegin (2001) points out that, in an ironic twist, the presence of patriarchal control over these women’s labour, as well as their preference for higher and better paying (upper-class) employers in a market where there is quite a demand for such labour, creates a market where the relationship between employers and employees are ‘more’ modern and professional in the sense that work hours, chore definitions/expectations, and due compensation -both wage and extras- are quite clear,



even though there are no formal/legal regulations. It is thus treated as an occupation in its own right notwithstanding that it still is within the limits of domestic space. The daily domestic worker's position in relation to the household is not negotiated in this case, although Ozyegin (2001) reports that, workers who are given more autonomy in the way they conduct their chores feel as though they are the master of the house.

With the influx of ex-Soviet women migrants to Turkey, a two-tiered market for women domestic labourers has emerged and live-in-domestic labourer has returned to middle and upper-middle class homes in the form of foreign migrant domestic labourers. In this context, as Akalin (2009) highlights, although domestic workers are in a live-in situation, they are away from slavery-like conditions, or away from the position of *evlatliks* because they can simply leave the job or the country to search for a new one. On the other hand, the live-in situation of migrant workers diminishes the professional aspects of the job and requires negotiating definitions, parameters, conditions as well as claims to control and dignity with regards to the expectations set by the historic *evlatlik system* and contemporary Turkish domestic labour market.

In tandem, migrant women evaluate their jobs in relation to their position in the household measured across a spectrum of exclusiveness/inclusiveness where inclusivity is captured by "being comfortable as in one's home" which ultimately usually means an expansion of surplus labour on the part of labourers. The lower end of the spectrum which I call exclusivity, is where the treatment dips below "being treated as a human", a phrase and a sentiment that was repeated to me by almost every participant. In our group conversations migrant women told me, for example, that it is better to find jobs through

friends who know that the employer will treat their employee like “a human being”. Jobs that are found through employment agencies may sometimes be “jobs (...) where they don’t give you food, they don’t treat you like a human being” (anonymous participant 2, 1 June 2016, Istanbul). Many Georgian women agreed that this is the first and foremost condition to their continued employment with an employer. Sevda (25 June 2016) echoed this sentiment in relation to her previous employment: “I don’t get involved, so what you are Christian or Muslim, you are a human being and I am human being too. As long as they treat me like a human being, I’ll give them life. Because they saw me like that there were no problems.” Being treated as a human involved respect for the employee’s sleeping arrangements, food requirements, her needs for time off, and being taken care of when sick. Narin, gave another dimension of “being treated like a human being” while explaining to me why she quit one of her earlier jobs:

Yes I am a caregiver, an assistant, but I needed to be treated like a human being too. The family used to give me food and they showed me a small corner of a table. They would determine the amount and I’d eat somewhere separate. Separate is not that important, of course it is possible, but something else bothered me, and I could not even eat. (They told me) “Use only this glass, don’t use any others”. Like I am dirtier than them. They told me “Use this glass, plate and fork”. I actually do that, I would not give my own glass to anybody. Because I don’t like using other peoples’ glasses. But I was very young then too, I was so clean, why would they do this to me? I resented that deeply. The food, one plate, and I could not take it any more (Narin, 7 July 2016).

The lower ends of the inclusion spectrum, as it approximates “not being treated as a human being” suggests a professional but cold and disengaged resistance which may escalate to quitting on the part of labourer. One important indicator on this spectrum of inclusivity/exclusivity is food rations. Having one’s bites counted, or a disregard for the worker’s food intake is a sign of “not being treated like a human being”. Many respondents reported that they quit households in which their food was counted or no food was left for them when employers went to work or a holiday. Allowing the worker to eat as they wish was valued as an indication of being “treated as a human”. Eating dinners together –perhaps as a family- was prized by migrant women and suggested more inclusivity. While there were some employers who kept track of their employee’s food preferences and made sure that these foods were available in the house, others were not so interested. Selin explained how she used to feel being excluded at one of her previous employer’s houses:

They would not treat me like a human being. Say she’d bring a cake, she’d cut it and she would not tell you to eat. She’d put it on the table. So you can cut it, you can have it. But you can’t cut it for yourself without her telling you to do so. You can’t ask because you don’t know the family that well. You are not in the family yet. So the cake looks at you, you look at the cake. (...) Well after learning Turkish you are more confident. You stand on your feet. When they break your heart you can too... I treated them very coldly. (Selin, 7 August 2016, Istanbul).

Quite a few migrants also mentioned that they felt as a family member because there was nothing hidden in the house, that is, they could enter each room (usually for cleaning

purposes). One migrant woman stressed that her employers left the air conditioner on during the week for her, even though they were at work and the children were at school. Another subject raised was illnesses. When probed, most migrant women reported that, when ill, they were taken to the doctor or hospital and their bills were paid by their employers. Furthermore, as will be discussed later, many also appreciated the concern shown for their families by their employers.

Migrant workers aim to secure dignity in their job and evaluate their working conditions continually on this basis. When these requirements are not met, rather than struggling against it, they prefer to quit their jobs at the earliest possible time. The more intense claims and resistances happen once they are comfortable enough to stay with a family. The next section shows such contestations (and consent) around compensation.

### 6.3.2. Job Contracts

Most migrant labourers in this study possessed papers as either guests or workers. As explained earlier, a “guest” is not allowed to work in Turkey therefore is not required to officially sign a contract. On the other hand, those who are in Turkey on work permit have to sign an official contract as one of the first of several bureaucratic steps (Ministry of Labor, Social Services and Family, 2017). With a work permit, migrants are entitled to a salary no less than minimum wage and social security payments paid by the employer proportionate to that wage –and ultimately to a retirement pension (ibid, 2017). More specifically, in the case of Georgian women who were on a work visa, even though they signed a contract, they were aware that what was more important were verbal agreements, market (wage rate) practices, and other forms of negotiations in relation to

their working and wage conditions. They also knew that even if they wanted to pursue their rights such an action would be too expensive, and/or the benefit would not be worth the effort while they would be looking for another job or waiting for it to be resolved in Georgia.

Georgian women were hired mostly on verbal agreements, even if they may have signed contracts as part of their work visa. No migrant woman in this study, regardless of their visa/document status, abided by any contract that they may have signed. This fact, and the following discussion on wages and chores, point to the presence of an internally regulated market, similar to that of Turkish domestic labourers. The unwritten nature of contracts, on the one hand, are an obstacle to professionalization of the job as super exploitation, abuse and firing could take place without recourse. On the other hand, it opens space for negotiations around holidays, salary increases, improvement of living and working conditions, in addition to certain random or regular benefits which were not previously discussed, as well as changing employers without penalty.

### 6.3.3. Wages

Wages were usually expressed in terms of a monthly salary, plus the “day off allowance” where the former is paid in US dollars and the latter in Turkish Lira. The salaries ranged from 500 USD to 1000 USD (in contrast to the minimum wage of 400 USD for the general Turkish labour force), usually depending on the size of the employer’s family, the amount and intensity of care and chores required. The day off allowance ranged from 30 to 100 Turkish Lira (TL), although the going rate seemed to be 40 to 50 TL in general (12 to 15 USD). For those who were on guest visas, the employer

paid health insurance while for those who were on a work visa, the employer paid the monthly social insurance payments (which was around 200 USD per month in 2016).

There are two types of hierarchies among salaries. The first dimension is based on skills and experience in the Turkish labour market, while the second relates to the amount and intensity of required chores. For the former, the most salient is knowledge of Turkish along with ways of doing chores the Turkish way, especially cooking but also cleaning. A majority of the migrants acknowledged that they were paid lower salaries when they first started working and the salary kept increasing as their knowledge of Turkish and “Turkish ways” kept accumulating regardless of whether they stayed with the same employer or not. Some learned these skills from the employer, some from ex-employees that they replaced, and some self-taught through watching Turkish series and cooking programs. Salaries are also based on the amount and intensity of chores. At the lower end were those who took care of older women or couples who are relatively able-bodied and at the higher end were childcare and/or *villa*<sup>13</sup> jobs. Many respondents searched for jobs matching their preferences and were fully aware of the going wages.

Sometimes employer demands increased with time at which time migrant women negotiated a higher salary. Zerrin, for instance, was hired to only be in charge of an elderly man for 600 USD –as a caregiver. Later she was asked to help with the household chores –which at the time of our interview had turned into a full blown “woman of the house” job-, which Zerrin felt was too much work for little salary. She then called her (Georgian) friends in the neighbourhood to talk and negotiate with her employers, which resulted in her getting an increase of 100 USD per month. Therefore, the Georgian

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<sup>13</sup> Expensive, multi-storied detached house set in a garden

migrants in the same neighbourhood were able to not only secure a raise for a friend, but also make sure that salaries and working conditions stayed at an acceptable level of correspondence in general.

On the other hand, responsibilities and the number of chores may also decrease, at which time re-negotiations may again take place. One migrant woman for example, waited through a salary cut followed up with an increase with the same family when the family was experiencing unemployment and tried to decide whether they could keep her – or whether they could do without her – after the two children of the household started school. The migrant woman did not want to change households, so they kept negotiating for a few months during which the salary went down with a promise of going up later.

Georgian migrant women consented to the going commensuration rates taking into consideration their skills, the requirements of the jobs, and the expected pay. They usually directly bargained with the employers at the time of recruitment or during their employment and evaluated the results of gains and losses. The last stop in a struggle in relation to securing wages is when a migrant worker decides to change employers. Particularly important here is the rhythm with which migrant women go to Georgia. Georgians with papers followed a rhythm of going to Georgia for visits and many used this an opportunity to change employers. Employers knew this too. Quite a few migrant women left their jobs over disputes about salary increases while some others got their way. Ada, for example, changed many employers. Some did not agree to pay her wage in US dollars, some did not agree to a raise, although in most houses the working conditions were quite similar in that they involved taking care of children (and their parents) and the household, with her own room and no problems over choice of food or taking a shower. But there was this family who wanted to keep her. In her account:

I had a fight in that house five months into my work. I was going to Georgia for two weeks. First time she cut 100 TL for that. OK. But the next time she cut 200 TL. I said “why, what is different?” She told me: “you are leaving tomorrow, don’t come back”. I said “I won’t”. The in laws were there too. She got so angry. I went to my room, collecting my stuff (...) Then I opened the door to see my bosses, husband and wife and the in laws there. They apologized. They brought me a gift for my daughter. I said “I don’t want this gift, I am leaving”. They kept apologizing. I kept saying “no”, but then I said I am human, they are human, I may have made mistake, they may have made mistake. I said “I will come back”. But they did not believe me, I got back after two weeks and they were surprised. After that they kept doing whatever I wanted. I was so comfortable at that house. I stayed there three years. (Ada, 18 December 2016)

Ada’s account points to the tacit understanding between an employer and employee, regardless of the presence of a written contract. Overall, the migrant workers resist unfair compensation impositions by staying informed about the rates, assessing their own levels of earned cultural skills, by evaluating the working conditions and the level of inclusivity within the family, relying on their friends and peers.

#### 6.3.4. Benefits

I describe the following as benefits, because they are not part of the initial verbal agreement between the employer and employee. Benefits are also an illustrative case of how unconventional struggle can take place in the context of employment and social reproduction: their occurrence is not related to labour processes or their end results. These may facilitate migrant women’s working conditions, but more so, they may sometimes



relieve financial burdens and add positive emotional attachment or exchange. Ultimately, such benefits may lead to feelings of “being comfortable as in one’s home”. Benefits ranged from being able to negotiate absences –during the day or year- to borrowing money. Several employers allowed domestic workers to go out during the day once they finished their job at home, or allowed the employee’s friends to come over for tea, dinner or sleep over. On a more material scale, random or regular extra financial contributions were also present. For example, some employees were able to borrow from their employers when there was a crisis at home and pay it back in monthly installments (no interest). Some employers waved off the debt entirely. Other material benefits were computers, tablets or smart cell phones which were given to the domestic labourer for their personal use. Many migrant women also received bonuses or gifts at Eid<sup>14</sup> times (twice a year) and at new year’s. Some received *zekat*, alms<sup>15</sup> from their employers and employers’ friends. A few employers and their extended families gave occasional or regular gifts to employees and their families; such as jewellery, clothing items (mostly unused but also sometimes used) which are usually brand names, and favourite or expensive food items such as expensive chocolate or perfumes.

Perhaps the largest material benefit came to Mujde who happened to change many employers after the older woman who she took care of for years passed away. Over the several months of my field work I was assured that Mujde went to visit the grave of her late employer regularly with flowers and prayers and there was a good reason behind it:

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<sup>14</sup> Muslim religious festivals. There are two Eids in one year. First Eid marks the end of Ramadan (month of fasting) and the second marks the end of pilgrimage.

<sup>15</sup> Obligatory payment made annually under Islamic convention for Muslims who own a certain amount and kinds of property and savings

Now we have our own house. May God be pleased with them, the children of that aunt helped me a lot. They bought me a land in my hometown. On the seaside. Then I built a house on it. They bought everything, all the cutlery, plates, furniture. They paid 10000 TL (3000 USD) to send the furniture over. They gave me clothes and gold. Then after everything was done, when I was leaving, they gave me 5000 USD. That aunt had promised me. She had told me I deserved even more... But how much more, really? (We all laugh) Sometimes even one's own parents won't do that. (Mujde, 5 June 2016, Istanbul).

Another benefit is when the employers allow the employee's family members to visit and stay with them. This was not a very common practice but was mentioned by several migrant women and may become a point of resistance. For example, Sevda wanted to have one of her daughters visit with her -staying at the employer's- when the employers were not so willing. In her words:

Everything was ready, I had spent so much money, the child was waiting to come. Then they retracted. After that I was upset. I lowered my face, I pouted. I did not talk too much. I used to prepare the food, "come and eat" I used to say. I was really broken hearted. Then they asked me "why are you treating us like that?" Then I told them bluntly that I resented them, that my heart was broken. I told them "I am working, but I have a life too." (Sevda, 25 June 2016).

Upon this confrontation and cold treatment the employers once again retracted and ever since Sevda's both daughters have been coming to Istanbul to stay at the employers every summer (as of 2020).

The lack of benefits did not escalate to the point where employees quit their jobs. Quitting usually happened when there was a gross mismatch between the employee's committed labour power and compensation, and/or, when the feelings of being included fell below the acceptable level in the spectrum of "inclusivity/exclusivity". However, I suggest that these benefits are usually interpreted as being included in the family. Depending on how the domestic labourer is situated in the constructed spectrum of "inclusivity/exclusivity" these benefits may become points of contestation which may incite the feelings of "being one of family" and in return, facilitate consent and extraction of surplus value from Georgian migrant workers.

#### 6.3.5. Chores/Labour Time

*I do everything, everything. There is no cleaning lady. Whatever the woman does in the house, that's what I do. (Maya, 19 June 2016)*

According to Luxton (1980) domestic labour consists of several distinct but related and overlapping processes ranging from cooking/cleaning to transforming wages into goods and services as well as planning, all of which require physical mental and emotional labour. The products of this labour reflect a woman's care for her family based on cultural standards. The nature of these labour processes make them difficult to be measured or quantified in terms of time. In this sense, the Georgian domestic labourer is hired to carry on various aspects of domestic work, depending on the employers'

expectations, needs and based on cultural expectations. Although the added cultural elements bring value to migrant women's labour power (as they learn Turkish language and cuisine, their wages increase) their domestic labour power and skills continue to be devalorized by the unlimited request for their labour power to be applied to a variety of overlapping chores. Georgian migrant women's accounts pointed to a general consent on the time schedules and required chores. This consent is rooted in their gender identities which position Georgian women to be responsible for all domestic work at home (*chapter five*) and is further shaped with ideologies about live-in-domestic labourers in Turkey, particularly the practice of *evlatlik*. Here is an excerpt from our conversation (26 June 2016) with a group of migrant women about whether they discussed the chores, hours, and working conditions before starting their job:

Anonymous Participant 1: No, everything was free (style). I did everything they asked me to. Do this, then do this, do this.

Anonymous Participant 2: My friend started at a house. She said "I will work from eight am to eight pm" but the employer said "no, you will work whenever I want". They don't want like that, working with hours. They want you to work whenever they want.

Anonymous Participant 3: Say there are visitors in the evening, it could be 12 am. Of course you will be serving them, they won't do it. They are expecting that. You can't say that you are tired.

Household chores depend on the composition of household. For those who work in households with children, the days are filled with preparing food for the children, changing diapers, taking the kids for outings, preparing dinner while the children are

napping, tidying up, cleaning, laundry and ironing. Especially for these women, caring involves not only children but also their parents who most of the time work outside of the house. These parents' expectations usually are to find a cooked meal at home, washed and ironed clothes, and tea/fruit service after dinner is cleared away. For those migrants who take care of relatively aged individuals, shopping (also for medication) and doctor's appointments, paying bills at the bank are part of their daily or weekly routine. Depending on the age of the subject of care, changing adult diapers, bathing, turning (in bed), administering medication, after-operation care may be added to the list of chores.

Many migrant women's work continues into the late evening and night. For example, once they are in their rooms for the evening many do the ironing while talking to their families or watching a show. Some have to accompany their employers to the bathroom, and some wake up for children. Migrant domestic labourers also prepare for and entertain guests and relatives of their employers, with varying degrees of frequency. The list of chores and a lack of a set time schedule suggest Georgian migrant women work long hours which reflect the long production time as mentioned above. In other words, there are no time limits on the expansion of their labour.

A few migrants, on the other hand, asserted that they were able to cut back or refuse additional chores which were not included in the original verbal contract although these refusals still did not translate into decreased working hours because they consented to other additions. Yasmeen worked as a nanny because of her education in pedagogy and English skills. Although she negotiated her responsibilities which consisted of childcare and light house tidying at the time of hiring, she had to take on additional chores. In her words: "But then, I had to cook, clean, and serve. He (the employer husband) just sits and

waits to be served! I have to prepare dinner for the whole family, and I have to decide what to cook. (...) After dinner, I have to make tea and serve. Then clean for two hours” (Yasmeen, 8 January 2017, Istanbul). As these responsibilities grew on her, Yasmeen drew the line on ironing and some other chores as follows: “One day they asked me to iron but I told them, if I have time I will do it. And I don’t have time so I don’t do it. They just try to assign me more and more duties.”

Although Yasmeen contested and resisted certain impositions, she consented to doing other extra chores which generally were expected of her because she is a woman who works in the social reproduction sector, and more specifically, as a live-in domestic labourer.

#### 6.3.6. Autonomy and Standards

*She treats me like I don’t know anything. I have been working in Turkey for so many years. Eight years at her relative’s place. Then two years in Goztepe<sup>16</sup>. How could I last this long if I did not know anything. But in grandma’s (employer’s) eyes, I can’t make it to anything. (Tumay, 15 January 2017)*

Resistances happen not as much around the quantity, timing and nature of chores as they do around knowledge of the job and relatedly, the autonomy in establishing its standards as well as being proud of one’s accomplishments. This is in line with Braverman’s (1974) assertion that labour processes under capitalism are marked with attempts to transfer autonomy and control from the worker to the manager or employer in this case, which lead to deskilling and devalorization of the labour force. Such attempts

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<sup>16</sup> A neighbourhood in Istanbul

also lead to reduced satisfaction on the part of employees. When carried out in a commodified form, household chores turn into a site of struggle which revolves around the executive versus practical/manual components of chores, and establishing and exercising standards in relation to the end result. The more a worker controls the executive part of chores the more satisfied and “comfortable” she feels and the more “effective” she becomes on the practical/manual components. This condition leads to feeling more “like at home” in the household, at which time the maximum expansion of surplus labour on the part of Georgian migrant women happens.

From the previous section it can be concluded that the live-in domestic workers are mostly hired for their “availability” as Akalin (2009) describes it. However, in the case of Georgian migrant women, the labour power is more than being available as it involves planning, pacing, paying attention to preferences and negotiating and/or upholding certain care and chore standards. On the latter, chores that are expected of domestic labourers reflect a combination of two sets of standards: the Turkish ways, and the worker’s own standards. Acquisition of the former adds value to migrant workers’ labour in the market. Adhering to the latter means more control exercised by the employee although sometimes at the expense of extra labour, that is, surplus value above and beyond what is already reaped from them. Establishing their own standards or not being told how to do chores also signal to migrant women that they know their job, which is a point of pride as well as a point of being comfortable as in one’s home.

To illustrate, Zehra (69) had been taking care of twins (and their parents and the family dog) for almost 10 years at the time of our interview. She explained how important

it was for her to control the pace, quality and quantity of her chores even though she had a lot of chores to complete including cooking, cleaning, and sleeping with the children:

I get up earlier than seven a.m. I prepare the kids' clothes and then breakfast. Then I take them to the school bus. After that I take the dog out for a walk, we walk slowly, happily. Then I return home, like a grandma. Whatever a grandma does, that's what I do at home. (...) I know my own work. I can take rest even in the afternoon, at around four p.m., nobody says anything. There is no end at the evening. My children stay with me until they go to bed. They sleep with me then I take them to their bed. (Zehra, 13 July 2016, Istanbul)

Nermin, on the other hand worked for an older woman under different circumstances (a month after the interview she was able to change jobs). While her days were also filled with endless chores she was unhappy because she had no control over determining the frequency and level of cleaning required in a house:

Every day, I have to wake up at seven a.m. and clean the whole house, every nook and cranny. There is no other job at home, so I have to do it again and again. Yes, I would work, do chores, but not in such manner. The whole house is clean, I still have to do it every day. (...) I will go (to Georgia) and will return to Turkey after I find a good job. I am used to a comfortable job. My previous job was comfortable, I used to be by myself, sit whenever I want, do whatever I want. Maybe that's why it is difficult for me. (Nermin, 8 January 2017, Istanbul)

Zehra and Nermin expended similar periods and amounts of labour power, under the same precarious conditions and gender ideologies. Not being able to exert control over the timing, pacing and direction of her labour processes caused Nermin to experience



dissatisfaction with her work, feelings of incompetency and being excluded from the family which all prepared the last stop in resistance: Nermin found a new job when she was in Georgia and never returned to that employer.

While adhering to one's own standards gives a feeling of control over one's labour it also requires an expansion of labour power over and above what is necessary. For many migrant women workers living in the same house as their employers did not help, because many had their own standards of cleanliness, or care. One migrant worker explained how each time the children touched the windows (and as young children they kept touching the windows quite frequently) she got up and spot cleaned them because they had to be spotless according to her standards. Many migrants reported that they constantly tidied while trying to find a compromise between their own standards and that of the other adult members of the household. Melek was one such migrant, who in general was happy with the way she was allowed to carry on with her work in a household which consisted of an older woman, her adult children and a grandchild:

I do the chores whenever I want. I always keep it tidy, that's what I like. I don't like a messy home. The mother is very messy, she leaves everything around and I pick them up. But I have to be careful too, because they don't like looking for their things. They like everything under their nose. (Melek, 30 June 2016)

Melek's work required constant reflection on her employer's standards while striking a balance between claiming control based on her standards and consenting to those of the employer's. Perhaps one of the most extreme cases was that of Narin, who took it into her own hands to make sure that her employer looked at her best as a professional, defying her instructions:

She interferes with shopping and cleaning so that I don't spend too much (money), or electricity. But I do it in hiding. Five months ago, before she got sick, she said "don't wash the pants, the blouses". But how will you go out like this, dirty clothes with spots? She goes to meetings like that, I am embarrassed. She said, "no it is clean, you only iron them". But what did I do, I washed them all in secret. Now everything is clean. (Narin, 7 July 2016, Istanbul)

Narin's resistance was not confrontational though it achieved her aim of being in charge of how a subject of care, or how anyone, should look, when they are in a professional meeting or in public reflecting her competence as woman of the house who takes custodial care of her family members.

Lastly, claiming control over the domestic labour processes and their standards may cost the employee more while bringing an additional layer of benefit to the employer. For example, Ennur was the other highest paid migrant, next to Yasmeen, with whom I spoke. She earned 1000 USD a month at a job where the intensity, timing and amount of chores were much higher compared to those of other domestic labourers. Ennur claimed quite a bit of control over the timing and standards of the household chores but her choices among the options provided by her employer actually added to her work requirements. Ennur worked in a three storey *villa*. There was an older couple (in their 70s) and a younger couple (in their late 30s) who lived in the house, and she took care of everybody. She reported that she was treated like one of family, because the employers did not want her to pout, or lower her face. Here is in her words how she added to her workload:

No other workers. I don't want anybody. Several times we hired an extra person, but whatever she did I had to redo it. Then my bosses tell me: "look why are you getting tired, we hire for you." But I don't want that woman. She comes, she does not do anything, she smokes, she drinks tea. After that, she says that she worked and then leaves. When I work by myself I know where I cleaned, so I trust that it is clean. (Ennur, 7 August 2016, Istanbul)

By rejecting other (women) workers in the house, Ennur became the ultimate authority on domestic labour processes in that household. She was one of the family because the house and care that went on within it reflected her standards. The employer, on the other hand, extracted even more surplus value from her, as now they did not have to pay salary to others for the same amount and quality of work performed in the household.

In summary, Georgian migrant women strike a balance between consent and resistance when they are working and living in their employers' homes. These struggles revolve around commensurate wages, position vis-à-vis employer family, and control over the pace, execution and standards of household chores. As such, these points of contestation need to be considered when conceptualizing resistance in the context of the commodification of domestic labour. Finally, the ways in which the extraction of surplus value is rendered invisible in this exchange is noteworthy in that it is culturally coloured by Georgian and Turkish gender ideologies which determine a woman's role in the household and the domestic labour market.

#### **6.4. CONCLUSION**

Adhering to the feminist political economy framework, this chapter has traced the local manifestations and articulations of a global capitalist political economy and social reproduction. The commodification of social reproductive labour, and particularly domestic labour, entails processes of its devalorization both in labour markets and in homes. At the same time, the social reproductive labour becomes redistributed, redefined and re-evaluated in Turkish homes. Given the centrality of extraction of surplus value from labour power and labour processes in capitalist accumulation, contestations around the re-construction and re-valorization of commodified domestic labour is analytically significant. This significance is explored through the lens of and by expanding on social reproduction theory and labour process theory, which together help conceptualize the daily or mundane tension between employers and employees in private homes as linked to global, regional and local economic and social relations of capitalism.

Georgian migrant women work long hours, performing a variety of chores in Turkish households which secure the social reproduction of their employers, themselves and their own families. As domestic labourers they sell skills usually attached to a woman's position held in a Georgian household to attain a position in a Turkish home, a position which itself is informed by long standing ideologies about live-in domestic labourers in Turkish households. In other words, Georgian migrant domestic labourers are in the dynamic process of re-ethnicizing and re-defining the class position of live-in caregivers in Turkish homes, while negotiating terms and conditions of their job. They do so from a position of precarity and vulnerability based on their gender, ethnicity and migrant status which are conditioned by capitalist economic relations, state policies and gender ideologies which relentlessly and exponentially devalue their labour. The nature

and conditions of their jobs impede the formation of class consciousness and organized class struggle. They not only work in an unregulated sector but also the ways in which they are isolated and oppose singular employers (as opposed to one common determinable employer) compounds the chances of individual and/or collective class conflict.

On the other hand, the days (and nights) of Georgian migrant women are filled with confrontations, negotiations, and calculations in relation to degrees of consent and dissent under gendered discourses, experiences and expectations that cast meaning to their work. As migrant women claim control over the executive components of chores, safeguard and redefine leisure time, challenge living conditions and respond to and assert positions in employers' families, they redefine the organization and the parameters of social reproductive work at local and global levels. These contestations bring about uneven gains and losses in terms of the expansion of labour and wages/compensations, which are actively and dynamically being folded in the exchange relationship between the buyers and sellers of domestic labour.

## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This dissertation is an ethnographic study of a small group of Georgian migrant women who work as live-in domestic labourers in Istanbul. It contextualizes their migration as well as daily work in relation to historical and contemporary political economy and social relations. Drawing from feminist political economy, and with the extended application of Marxist concepts, this study explores the macro- and micro-structural circumstances which surround Georgian migrant women's joining into the echelon of the global labour force and sale of their labour power. Considering that migrant women in this study sell their social reproductive labour to sustain their own families in Georgia, the local and transnational daily activities and related mediating mechanisms are examined within the social reproduction framework. This study treats social reproduction to be the maintenance of human life, as well as social structures and relations, based on an expanded and nuanced conceptualization of reproduction by feminist scholarship. Social reproduction relations are multi-scaled and multi-sited and dialectically correspond to changing priorities of production. The use of social reproduction as an analytical framework sheds light on various processes, institutions and ideologies surrounding the connection between capitalism and its accompanying reproduction imperatives, as well as the various levels of benefit to capital accumulation. Relatedly, then, capital accumulation and social reproduction are conceptualized as interlinked and integral processes of capitalism. This thesis outlines patterns of production and social reproduction in Georgia which have shifted remarkably in the recent past, following the establishment, and later the demolition, of socialism. Such shifts have been accompanied by the incorporation of nation states of the region to an

exponentially globalizing capitalism. Through the lens of social reproduction, this project follows the study group's social reproductive labour to uncover its devalorization, commodification and (re)organization in response to the globalizing capitalism's accumulation and reproduction needs mitigated by the efforts of Georgian and Turkish states.

The primary objective of this study has been to discern the reasons, processes and consequences of Georgian women's migration to Turkey. Participants in this project are one small group among scores of women labourers who traverse borders amid the economic and political re-structuring effects of global neoliberal capitalism in search of cheap resources including labour. The era of contemporary neoliberal capitalism is marked by increasingly mobile capital and people migrating in differentiated patterns along race, citizenship, and gender divisions which are selectively facilitated, regulated, hierarchized and disciplined by individual states and international governing organizations (Barber & Bryan, 2017). Furthermore, social reproduction is being steadily characterized with transnational outsourcing and flow of value from material, emotional, and labour power resources of poorer regions to richer ones (Yeates, 2012, p.137). Feminist political economy literature highlights how nation states, increasingly informed by a global political economy dominated by neoliberal capital, have been withdrawing from social provisions and relying on the re-privatization of social reproduction to homes and markets (Bakker & Gill, 2019). As states have gradually accommodated neoliberal production and redistribution endeavors, women in developed and developing countries are expected to compensate for the shortfall in social reproductive resources through their paid and unpaid work. Wealthier women and developed countries are able to outsource the responsibility of reproducing and maintaining life to women of increasingly more

racialized and migrant backgrounds who have been impoverished through the same economic and social pressures created in their own countries with regards to resources. Comparisons with women who take part in this global gendered migration pattern reveal that the conditions, experiences and aspirations which compel Georgian women to migrate across borders and maintain a transnational presence are similar, yet also conditioned by historical and cultural processes.

In this project, concentration on the daily dimension of social reproduction which encompasses all physical, mental, emotional and managerial work devoted to sustain life in households and families discloses the transnational and global scope of capitalism's reproduction. Turkish homes and the Turkish state have outsourced part of their social reproductive need to migrant women, while Georgian women outsourced theirs by migrating to another country. Georgian migrant women are paid to cook, clean, shop, tend to children and the elderly in Turkish homes. The Turkish state mitigates capitalist need for a cheap labour force and benefits from Georgian women by favouring, controlling and devalorizing their labour power through visa policies. While getting paid to fulfill the physical and emotional needs of their employer families, migrant women (re)organize and redefine their social reproductive work geared to their own families transnationally. They send remittances so that cooking, cleaning, shopping, and accommodation can continue for the well-being of their families. Georgian migrant women's wages finance the social reproduction strategies of their families, communities, and increasingly that of the Georgian state. In tandem, they redistribute their daily physical chores among other women of the family, who, in this case, reproduce and sustain a cheap labour force in Georgia through their domestic labour in households. Moreover, migrant women expand unpaid work by continuously devoting themselves to



(physical) traveling, gift sending and vicarious digital communication in order to oversee the daily workings of their Georgian households. Therefore, this study highlights the transfer of value in the realm of social reproduction by focusing on the transnational dimension of its outsourcing. It demonstrates the transfer of love and care, extracted and channeled from Georgian families to Turkish families, along with the unpaid labour that make commodification of migrant women's labour possible.

Related to this last observation, a transcending mechanism of surplus value transfer used in capital accumulation is also explored through the lens of social reproduction: the gendered division of labour. Feminist scholarship contends that gender ideologies about men and women's ascribed roles in families are critical in discerning the collection, allocation and redistribution of material resources, which in return, sustain the continuance of such ideologies (Young, Wolkowitz, McCullagh, 1981). In general, these ideologies translate into the negation of women's contributions as productive and demeans women's labour in terms of value, expansion and return, with reverberations in and support from labour market practices and state policies (ibid). They help construct present and future individual and collective identities, thus providing a basis for cultural transmission (Laslett & Brenner, 1989). Georgian women's migration and the expansion of unpaid labour for social reproduction sustain the devalorization of women's labour by reinforcing the gendered division of labour locally and transnationally. In Georgia, men are spared household chores by women of the family who are designated as replacement social reproduction workers by migrants. Moreover, although mathematically women may have become the "breadwinners" of their households by providing the majority of indispensable income for their families, men continue to be treated as such by a concerted family effort to prevent them from accessing and managing the "domestic budget".

Remittances are earmarked, and additional labour is expanded transnationally on the part of migrant women to protect Georgian patri-local practices and women's roles in them as daughters, mothers and mothers-in-law. At the receiving end in Turkey, Georgian women are hired to perform household duties deemed to be the women's obligation according to Turkish gender ideology and state policies which see women in charge of families' maintenance and reproduction. As long as such social reproductive duties are fulfilled by women (migrant or non-migrant), gender ideologies, practices and policies favouring gender inequality will stay unchallenged. Moreover, Georgian women labourers continue to act on their own (constructed) identities as the "woman of the family", rooted in Georgian cultural practices. This identity often causes them to expand unpaid (surplus) labour power for the well-being of the employer families too, under family and kinship rhetoric. Finally, the Georgian gendered labour market, where women are directed to jobs based on their ability to "serve" and men to jobs based on their "pride" is sustained. In short, the gendered division of labour which devalorizes women's labour power by securing the invisible extraction of surplus value at home, and by extension in the labour markets, is safeguarded to a degree, and projected into the future on ideological and material grounds.

The above discussion, although deliberated in generalizing terms, underscores the presence (and anticipated reproduction) of distinctive local and regional social structures. Among those already presented are the Georgian patri-local kinship system, and Turkish visa policies which facilitate Georgians' entry and stay in Turkey over other nationalities. Accordingly, this project is sensitive to local manifestations of global capitalism and considers Georgian women's migration as a unique social formation by charting the specificities of the region's historical and current political economy, migrations, and

cultures. Capitalist accumulation continues to steadily seize material and human resources across regions of the globe in a temporally and geographically uneven way. It does so through distinctive approaches in different localities, while exposing and reshaping historical social relations between and within regions (Harvey, 2003). These uneven and hierarchizing consequences are further lived and interpreted differently (Kasimir & Carbonella, 2014). Historically rooted relations between Georgia and Turkey are redefined under global and regional political economies and inform practices and policies which surround current migration patterns. Historical connections find further significance when they are factored into deliberations about migrant women's migration and transnational presence. Georgian women explain their migration with reference to a relationship which oscillates between "animosity" and "neighbourliness" between the two countries, a framework in which social divisions across the two societies have long been consolidated. In the contemporary transnational space, they are positioned within two social formations created through a series of instantiations which reflect critical political economic turns.

One of these formations is kept alive by Georgian migrants who came to the Ottoman territory before the Soviet revolution, to mark the significance of Georgian migrants' successful and influential presence in (the Ottoman) history and their cultural roots. The other formation is contemporary and a result of Turkish business ventures in Georgia which is a latecomer (compared to Turkey) to the capitalist markets. As women working in the domestic sector, Georgian migrant women are excluded, even made invisible, by existing networks and organizations which value past and present economic and political "accomplishments" coded masculine and productive, as opposed to women's work and significance which is associated with the "domestic" and "non-productive". In

addition, this study group distanced themselves from two gendered, historically informed constructs in the transnational space which stem from the importance of women for families and nations: a) “Natasha” which denotes an ex-Soviet woman who is (prone to be) a prostitute, and b) the unruly (Muslim) Turkish man. They defend their sexual virtuousness as indexed to their Georgian womanhood, through transnational practices designed to selectively challenge, redefine, and confirm various aspects of these constructs and concomitant ideologies. Historical events, relations and formations between Georgia and Turkey are thus determined to be crucial factors in explaining the constricting forces and the nature and direction of Georgian women’s agency in the context of this gendered migration from Georgia to Turkey.

The findings of this study offer a contemporary and expanded class analysis by addressing production and social reproduction relations simultaneously, in light of the feminist political premise that social divisions and hierarchizations are coproduced, controlled and maintained with the production of surplus value (Bhattacharya, 2017). Applying a modified understanding in light of changing production systems and relations since Marx’s original writings (Marx, 1867/1990), class here is conceptualized as a set of processes rather than a fixed relation to the means of production. These processes can best be captured by people’s shifting and antagonistic social interdependencies, in relation to making a living (Thompson, 1966; Kalb, 2015). By extension, class analysis involves examination of the degree and conditions of access to resources of social reproduction, and the creation and reproduction of difference in the process. Georgia’s independence from the USSR is an illustrative case of the establishment of capitalist relations onto a previously non-capitalist regime. In this context, the introductory impacts of debt-inducing financialized capitalism through violent disciplining, annulation of production

industries, and the significantly skewed redistribution of social provisions are traced to Georgian families' income generation activities. This focus allows us to capture the local nature and extent of dispossessions, as well as the roots of commodification of Georgian resources and the social reproductive labour of Georgian women (and the labour power of all Georgians). Rendered unable to provide for their families and experiencing significant cuts in their social safety net, Georgians join the global labour market where their education, skills, and previous accomplishments have become void of value.

The establishment of capitalism creates accumulation of differences among geographies and populations through dispossessions, which in turn increase prospects of exploitation by creating divisions among the labour force (Federici, 2004). This can be discerned in the history of relocations of migrant labourers in a hierarchized global labour force on the basis of ethnicity (Wolf, 1982). Officially, a migrant status locks a Georgian woman in a precarious position in labour markets and in Turkish homes by hindering her access to employment related benefits and/or legal recourses in relation to her employment rights. Lack of language skills, along with lack of cultural and procedural knowledge with regards to Turkish society further dampens the value of her labour power. Thus, Georgian migrant women's dissimilarity in ethnicity and migrant status in relation to Turkish women compound, deepen and diversify class cleavages in Turkish society, between nations, local and international labour markets, and among women. Ethnicity and migrant status become constitutive of and integrally attached to Georgian migrant women's labour power, which had already been essentially devalorized on the premises of the gendered division of labour.

Application of the same expanded lens of class analysis offers a nuanced explanation to social reproduction labour processes and associated mechanisms of value

extraction. Contestations and negotiations between Georgian migrant women and employers in Turkish homes provide a further glimpse into class relations which are being (re)formed locally and internationally. Relatedly, class struggle, defined “as happening in daily life” by Braverman (1974) is captured. Labour power is the main and most unique source of surplus value in capital accumulation (Marx, 1867/1990). Surplus value extraction is achieved through general processes of devalorization of a labour force which result from dispossessions and differentiations as discussed earlier. Further devalorizations and surplus value appropriations happen through workplace control and discipline mechanisms which urge the labourers to consent and resist at selective times and points of the production process (Burawoy, 1979). Outsourcing of social reproductive chores establishes Turkish employers in a higher-class position as a group who can afford to hire such a labourer, whereas a Georgian woman sells her social reproductive labour there as a migrant because her family cannot sustain itself in Georgia. In Turkish households, Turkish and Georgian women confront each other over wages, standards, and autonomy. These confrontations take place in an unregulated market where both Turkish and Georgian cultural norms become decisive points of reference in establishing the parameters of social reproductive labour processes and the nature of demands, resistances, concessions and compensations. Short of any collective attempts, migrant women develop resistance strategies drawing from multiple sources such as visa regulations, networks, and recently gained (Turkish) cultural skills, which lead to uneven and unconventional gains and losses over the control and remuneration of their labour power.

Concisely, through the history of migration and daily lives of the study group, this dissertation represents a historically and culturally situated trajectory of the

commodification of Georgian migrant women's social reproductive labour, in parallel with the subjugating effects of contemporary neoliberal capitalism. Tracing the contours, content, and implications of their paid and unpaid work at household, nation state and transnational levels, it sheds light on the persistence of transnational reorganization, recalibration, redistribution and reinterpretation of social reproductive work which bring layers of benefit to capital accumulation. In this context, binational historical connections and each country's cultural practices are found to be sources of material and ideological conditions which ambivalently shape, constrict and inform migrant women's agency.

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APPENDIX A: MAPS

MAP OF TURKEY AND GEORGIA



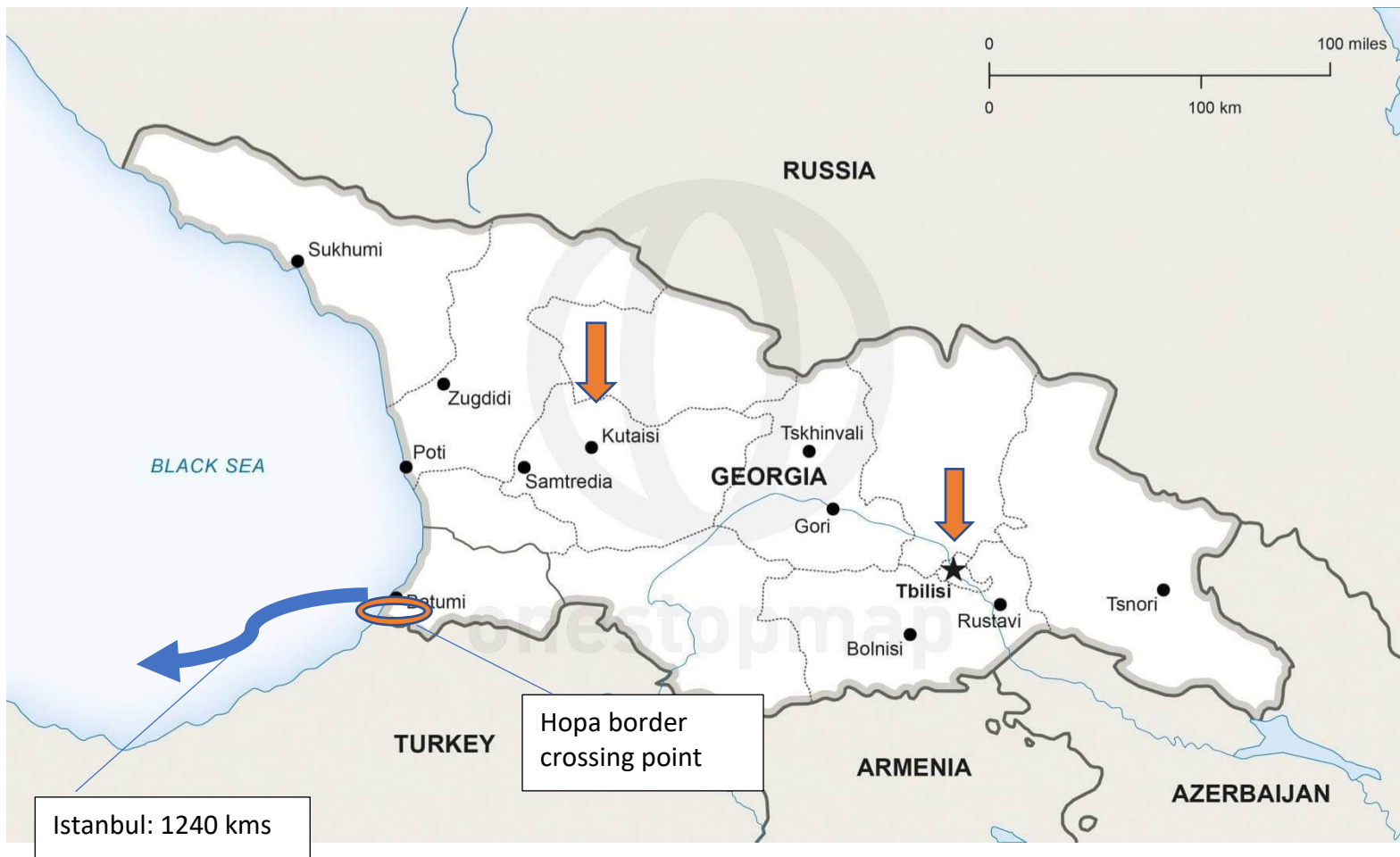
MAP OF ISTANBUL -SITES OF FIELD WORK

276



MAP OF GEORGIA -SITES OF FIELDWORK

277



Istanbul: 1240 kms

Hopa border crossing point

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

### Interview:

#### Biographical questions

How old are you? /Date of birth?

Where are you from? /Birth place?

How long have you been in Turkey?

Are you married?

What is your education?

#### Household questions:

How many people are in your household?

Does anybody (else) work in the household? Are there any other incomes?

-probe: agricultural income? Any pensions?

Any social welfare services that you rely on? Any help to migrants, their families or non-migrant families?

How was the distribution of chores before (even before independence), and then, before and after migration? Or in general?

-probe: what happens when you are there?

Any plans regarding future employment?

Probe: what kind of jobs are available, for men/women, in the future?

What are the major expenses?

Who decides where to spend the money?

Are there any savings? What would you use the savings for?

Are there any plans for other members of the family to migrate –children, grandchildren?

Migration history:

Describe what prompted the migration

Describe any preparations that happened for the first migration (and now too) –and first travel

Do other members of the family live abroad?

-probe: If yes: where, on visa or not, what kind of job, what kind of schedule.

How did you hear about Turkey?

What did you think about (female) migration before and now?

What do you think about migration destinations, before, now and in the future?

How did you come?

-probe: intermediary company, friends/relatives, via which route, had to borrow?

What was your visa situation then and what is it now? How do you feel about these?

What were your first experiences?

-probe: homesickness, language, treatment

What effect do you feel you being in Turkey has on your family relations? your relationship with your husband? With your children?

With your neighbours? (who else are you in touch with?)

Probe: good and bad as they feel. How do they cope?

Work History:

Where did you work before migration? Before or after the independence?

Tell me about what you remember about the Soviet times? What did you think of its end?

-probe: social welfare services, distribution, oppression, migration patterns if any. Ethno-nationalistic feelings?

How did you find your first job in Turkey and/or the following jobs?

Describe/compare your current job (and the previous ones)

-probe: how many hours, the chores, day off, how much, how much on your day off, how many people in the household

What do you think of your job? What did you think of it before coming to Turkey? And your husband?

Your neighbours/others, what did they think of your job then and now? Would you prefer another job in Georgia?

-probe: Prestige? Skill?

How long are you planning to stay? What was the original plan?

What do you think you will do when you go back?

Are you paying into any state retirement plans?

Do you have friends in Turkey? What do you do in your day off?

What is the best part of your job and/or being in Turkey?

What is the worst part/experience of your job and/or being in Turkey? How did you (or do you) cope with it?

*Transnational Connections:*

How often do you travel to Georgia? And how long do you stay there?

Probe: by plane, bus? Regularity? Unusually longer/shorter stays?

What is your communication schedule and medium with your family? & The content?

Probe: skype? What do you tell them, what do you keep to yourself?

How much do you send to Georgia? How? And who gets to spend it on what?

Probe: Western Union or bus drivers? Commission? Male or female members spend it?  
For future, for now?

What other items do you take/send to Georgia? How?

Probe: shopping in Turkey, prestigious items? Send with friends?

Tell me about the effects of (female) migration out of Georgia

Probe: best and worst impacts on a variety of scales. –how do you cope with the worst?

Probe 2: What do you think of the financial benefits of migration? What happens to the families who don't have migrants in their families?

How do you follow the news from Georgia? What do you think of the news?

Probe: the economic situation, the governing party, the future?

Do you think Georgia's agreement with the EU will change the people's plans about migration?

Thank you!



## **Life Story:**

### Family Background –Childhood until marriage

#### Information about parents

Where were they from, migration, education, livelihood strategies

#### Information about siblings

How many, birth order, education, relationship

#### Living conditions –during childhood and adolescence

Income level, standard of living, housing, chores, leisure events, access to social services

### Recent past -present

#### Married? If yes, how did it develop, any resource exchanges (dowry etc.), did it involve moving?

Relationship with the husband, and the in-laws, living arrangements, how did they change?

#### Information on children

Number, sex, order, issues around their bringing up and education, their jobs, their relationships,

#### Education and Job History:

Level of education, how was that obtained (paid/not?), first job, later jobs, commensurate to the education? Changes in employment strategies, lifestyle, savings etc.

#### Social life:

Most important people in your life? Relationship with friends, neighbours, changing relationships over time? Religious beliefs, practices? Leisure activities?

#### Life in Turkey:

How long, how well, friends, work, employers?

#### Looking back: positive events/ periods, what did they mean? (proudest moments?)

#### Looking back: difficult events/periods and resources for support (relatives, coping mechanisms)

-particularly in relation to the Soviet regime, transitions, economic crises, wars?  
What did they mean?

**APPENDIX C: INTERVIEWEES**

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b># of years in Turkey</b>	<b>Where from</b>	<b>Visa status</b>	<b>Salary (USD) + day off (TL)</b>	<b>Work</b>	<b>Vocation</b>	<b>Family in Georgia</b>
<b>ILKNUR</b>	58	3	Tbilisi	visitor	500+30	Caregiver <sup>17</sup>	piano teacher+culinary	2 daughters, grandchildren
<b>MUJDE</b>	48	9	Batum	visitor	700+50	clean villa	tailor but did not work	Son+husband grandchildren
<b>MERVE</b>	53	6	Gori	visitor	700+50	young child, parents, duplex	music teacher	Son+DIL <sup>18</sup> +husband grandchildren
<b>NAZLI</b>	40	2	Ozurgeti	visitor	650+30 + suitcase trade	caregiver	Music teacher +hazelnut gardens	MIL <sup>19</sup> +2 sons+ Daughter and grandchildren (husband works both in Turkey and Georgia)

<sup>17</sup> Caregiver: Usually involves taking care of old-er individuals who have physical and mental (senility) obstacles to self-care.

<sup>18</sup> DIL: daughter in law

<sup>19</sup> MIL: mother in law

Pseudonym	Age	# of years in Turkey	Where from	Visa status	Salary (USD) + day off (TL)	Work	Vocation	Family in Georgia
ZEHRA	69	13	Tbilisi	work permit	650+30	school age twins +parents	bookstore manager	Son+DIL+ grandchildren
MISRA	58	6	Gori	visitor	700+50	2 young children+ parents	teacher	2 sons+2 DILS+ Grandchildren +husband
MELEK	40	6	Kutaisi	visitor	700+50	older child, parents, grandma, big house	hair dresser	Husband+son
ESRA	41	5	Gori	visitor	700+50 +suitcase trade	caregiver	3 University degrees but always business	Mother+2 children+ grandchild+husband
PELIN	62	6	Gori	work permit	500+25	caregiver	nurse	Son+2 daughters (all adult)

Pseudonym	Age	# of years in Turkey	Where from	Visa status	Salary (USD) + day off (TL)	Work	Vocation	Family in Georgia
<b>ENNUR</b>	50	7	Gori	work permit	1000+ 100	2 adults+ their parents, villa	music teacher	Husband+son+DIL Grandchildren
<b>ESTER</b>	61	4	GORI	overstayed	600+50	caregiver	accountant	2 sons+2 DILs+ grandchildren
<b>TIJEN</b>	39	6	Batum	visitor	700+35	caregiver	Nurse, but never worked	MIL+2 sons+ 1 DIL+ husband
<b>MELAHAT</b>	55	7	Gori	overstayed		caregiver	high school, farm business	2 sons+2DILs +husband + grandchildren
<b>RUHSEN</b>	58	8	Kutaisi	visitor	600+50	caregiver	finance/ banks	none
<b>DUYGU</b>	54	2	Tbilisi	overstayed	550+30	caregiver	economy/nursing home	2 daughters (husband in Turkey)
<b>UGUR</b>	66	7	Gori	visitor	550+50	caregiver	economist	Son+DIL +grandchildren

Pseudonym	Age	# of years in Turkey	Where from	Visa status	Salary (USD) + day off (TL)	Work	Vocation	Family in Georgia
<b>ADA</b>	47	9	Kutaisi	visitor	750+50	child care +parents	law +also some army	2 daughters (husband self-sufficient)
<b>BAHAR</b>	27	3	Batum	visitor	0 (between jobs)	Has done child care, caregiving, and villa work	psychology degree (incomplete) service sector	not married/own house
<b>YASMEEN</b>	47	3	Sokhumi	work visa	1000+ 50	child+parents	teacher/INGOs in Georgia	Daughter+mother
<b>HATICE</b>	46	8	Kutaisi	visitor	800+50	child care +parents	Teacher	FIL <sup>20</sup> +son+DIL+ grandchildren +daughter
<b>CEYDA</b>	50	8	Batum- Tbilisi	visitor	800+30	child care+parents	mechanical engineer (train)	Mother+2 children

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<sup>20</sup> FIL: Father in law

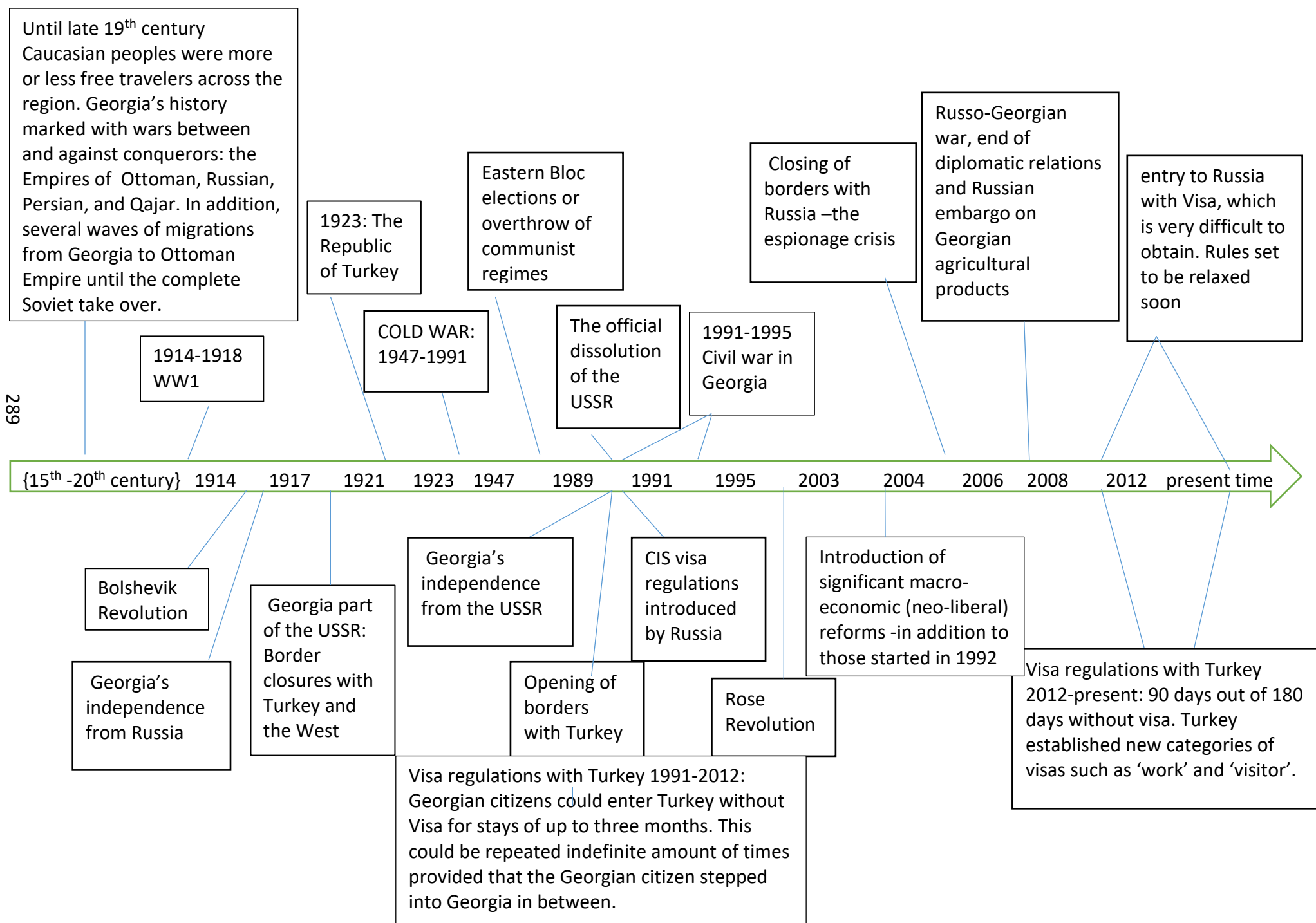


<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b># of years in Turkey</b>	<b>Where from</b>	<b>Visa status</b>	<b>Salary (USD) + day off (TL)</b>	<b>Work</b>	<b>Vocation</b>	<b>Family in Georgia</b>
<b>IHSAN</b>	54	6	Tbilisi	overstayed	?	caregiver	economy/manager of market	MIL+son+DIL (+ 2 independent daughters)
<b>SEVDA -life history</b>	35	6	Kutaisi	visitor	800+50	caregiver	nurse/did not work	MIL and FIL+ 2 daughters+husband
<b>NARIN -life history</b>	62	13	Tbilisi	work permit	700+40	caregiver	high school, different jobs	Son+wife +grandchild
<b>NILAY -life history</b>	57	7	Tbilisi	work permit	700+100	caregiver	tailor, different jobs	Son+wife +grandchildren +husband
<b>NERMIN -life history</b>	52	7	Batum	visitor	650+50	caregiver	teacher	MIL+husband+2 adult children
<b>NIMET -life history</b>	45	7	Kutaisi	work permit	700+100	caregiver	controller (university degree)	Son+DIL+husband +grandchild+aunt
<b>ZERRIN -life history</b>	60	8	Kutaisi	work permit	700+100	caregiver	supervisor of thermal baths	Daughter+husband +grandchildren

Pseudonym	Age	# of years in Turkey	Where from	Visa status	Salary (USD) + day off (TL)	Work	Vocation	Family in Georgia
<b>MERYEM - life history</b>	55	4	Tbilisi	overstayed	700 +40	twin toddlers +parents	opera singer	Daughter +grandchild +mother in law+ husband



## APPENDIX D: CHRONOLOGY



## APPENDIX E: CONVERSION RATES

Exchange Rates during the summer of 2016 -Average and rounded to nearest decimal

USD: US Dollar (denomination: cent; 100 cent=1 USD)

TL: Turkish Lira (denomination kurus; 100 kurus=1 TL)

GEL: Georgian Lari (denomination tetri; 100 tetri =1 GEL)

There may be slight discrepancies in currency exchange rates as they fluctuate daily and can fluctuate sharply within a month (up to 2 decimal points). In addition, exchange rates are not fixed across country. For example, when we crossed the border to Georgia from Sarp border post, the exchange rate for 1 TL corresponded to 0.6 GEL, whereas it was 1TL to 0.77 in Batumi.

<b>USD (US DOLLAR)</b>	<b>TL (TURKISH LIRA)</b>	<b>GEL (GEORGIAN LARI)</b>
<b>1</b>	3.3	2.3
	1	0.7
<b>500</b>	1650	1150
<b>700</b>	2310	1610
<b>1000</b>	3300	2300

Income levels and ordinary expenditures in Georgia in the summer of 2016

<b>OCCUPATION</b>	<b>Salary in GEL</b>	<b>Salary in USD</b>
<b>nurse</b>	350-400	152-173
<b>Old age pension</b>	160	70
<b>Pension for disabled</b>	180	78
<b>Teacher</b>	200	87
<b>Street cleaner</b>	400	174
<b>Waiter</b>	20 per day	8.7
<b>Rent scheme</b>	220-300	100-130
<b>Company/bank jobs for university graduates</b>	500-600	217-260
<b>Police officer</b>	300	130
<b>Tailor</b>	35-50 per day	15-22

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>GEL</b>
<b>rent</b>	350-400
<b>power</b>	150-300
<b>Meat per kg</b>	15
<b>Tomatoes per kg</b>	1,5
<b>Roasted chicken</b>	8
<b>University Education</b>	Around 1800 per year
<b>Subway fee</b>	0.50 one way
<b>Funeral (high end)</b>	7000
<b>Wedding</b>	16000

<b>Bus ticket Tbilisi-Kutaisi</b>	10 one way
<b>Eating out at Turkish restaurant 4 people</b>	60
<b>3D dental imaging</b>	50
<b>500 pack of Ibuprofen</b>	120
<b>Pair of shoes</b>	40
<b>Beer</b>	3
<b>Marlboro cigarette pack</b>	3
<b>Domestic labourer for childcare</b>	200
<b>Call Turkey</b>	30 tetri per minute
<b>Bus fare to Turkey</b>	50 USD =115 GEL
<b>Car</b>	Approximately 15,000