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SOCIO-SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF MIGRANT

WOMEN'S LIVES IN TBILISI, GEORGIA

By

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SOCIO-SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF MIGRANT WOMEN'S LIVES IN TBILISI, GEORGIA

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 This thesis provides an exploration into the experiences and perspectives of Georgian rural women who have migrated to Tbilisi, Georgia. The aim of this paper is to understand the affects of this mobility and migration on Georgian women's socio-spatial dimensions and what this means for the economic and cultural survival of women in post-Soviet Georgia. Specifically, the research focuses on the spatial availability of family and rural contacts and the use of social safety nets as a coping strategy to aid women in the transition to urban life in Tbilisi. In addition, this paper addresses the role of women in Georgia throughout history and how this has played into the migrants' decisions to migrate today. Drawing on in-depth interviews of migrant women, migration statistics, feminist migration research, and social capital research, this study builds an understanding of women's experiences in their migration to the city of Tbilisi and how women manage their linked rural-urban socio-spatial networks.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Society in Georgia sees women as the ones who raise the children, take care of the household, and preserve the traditional spirit of the family. Throughout history, family for a woman has been a key agent in ensuring her personal happiness and welfare, and as a social asset, which influences her social positions and allows her to view herself as socially valuable. Women's lives have been strained since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Georgian independence in 1991. Standards of living took a sharp downturn after the collapse of the Soviet economy, when jobs formerly guaranteed by the state simply ceased to exist. As processing industries closed down and export markets for Georgia's products collapsed, poverty increased in both urban and rural areas (Figure 1.1). This downfall in the economy and stagnation in employment opportunities increased the burdens on women, as the ones who maintain the household and care for their family's needs.

Figure 1.1: The Country of Georgia (Source: CIA Factbook 2007).

In the eighteen years of independence, health and development statistics illustrate a struggling economy with over half of the Georgian population below the poverty line (see Table 1.1). The Georgian government with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is working to increase the socioeconomic status of the country through the country's commitment to fulfilling the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that, although global in origin, address specific Georgian needs: (1) halve extreme poverty and malnutrition; (2) improve primary and secondary education; (3) promote gender equality and empower women; (4) reduce child mortality; (5) improve maternal health; (6) limit the spread of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases; (7) ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) develop a partnership for development. The UNDP finds the completion of the MDGs as important for Georgia

Total population (million) (2006)[1]	**4.4**
Gross domestic product, per capita (USD) (2004)[2]	**1,151**
Unemployment rate (%) (2006)[2]	**14.6**
Population living below the national poverty line (%) (2003)[2]	**54.5**
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births) (2006)[1]	**28.2**
Mortality rate, child under-5 (per 1,000) (2006)[1]	**32.0**
Adult (>15 years) literacy rate, (%) (2003)[1]	**100**
% of population with sustainable access to an improved water source (2002)[1]	**58**
% of population with sustainable access to improved sanitation (2002)[1]	**83**
Human development index rank out of 177 countries (2004)[2]	**97**

Table 1.1: Georgian health and development indicators (Sources: World Health Organization and United Nations Development Programme)

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[1] (WHO 2007)
[2] (UNDP 2006)

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because improvement in socio-economic indicators regarding eight MDGs benefits the general well-being of Georgia's population. The UNDP in the *Millennium Development Goals in Georgia: 2004-2005 Progress Report* (2005, 3) notes some progress, "For the first time in years, the share of the population living below the official poverty line has decreased," and some goals to still attain, "although there is no change in the extreme poverty level. Overall, rural poverty remains more pronounced than urban poverty."

This hurdle of extreme poverty is difficult to overcome when there is little to no employment available. The official unemployment rate in Georgia in early 2006 was 14.6 percent; among men, it is as high as 17 percent and among women, it is approximately 12 percent (DSG 2007). Researchers have questioned the validity and reliability of the Georgian government's employment statistics and suggest that unofficially the unemployment rate has been estimated at an overwhelming 50 percent (Iashvili 2008). Regardless, this higher rate of male unemployment has forced women to take on the role of family breadwinners in addition to raising children and caring for the family during conditions of economic crisis. Overall, women more often than men take up multiple jobs, combining informal sector work with formal work, in addition to their caretaking duties in the home (Dragadze 1993). For many in rural poverty, they are simply leaving the village for the urban centers, with the hope of employment.

Women and Poverty in Rural Georgia
With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the creation of about one million small farmers through land privatization, each with small plots of land (less than one hectare), the nature of agriculture changed dramatically (IFAD 2006). Newly privatized farmers, many fleeing the urban areas just after independence, reverted to subsistence production

to support ailing families (Chapter II). Unfortunately, the farmers did not have the abilities to maintain the financial, human and material resources necessary to continue production, therefore, crop yields decreased and with it, rural job opportunities dwindled.

Today, more than 80 percent of Georgia's rural people depend completely on their own farms for their subsistence, and a typical household consumes more than 70 percent of what it produces (IFAD 2006). However, most rural households are trapped at the minimum subsistence level, as they make a meager living and are unable to generate a surplus to reinvest back into building up their assets (Table 1.2). Rural Georgians are

Rural population (million) (2006)	**2.1**
Rural population (% of total population) (2006)	**47.7**
Number of rural poor (million, approximate) (2006)	**1.1**
Rural population below the poverty line (%) (2003)	**52.7**
Improved water source, rural (% of rural population with access) (2004)	**67.0**
Improved sanitation facilities, rural (% of rural population with access) (2004)	**91.0**

Table 1.2: Rural poverty statistics (Source: International Fund for
Agricultural Development)

economically vulnerable, as productivity is low, underemployment and unemployment rates in the sector are high, and income is inadequate (IFAD 2006). The International Fund of Agricultural Development (2006) found that the total agricultural production in Georgia in 2004 had fallen by more than half compared to the pre-independence period, making scarce employment even scarcer. As more and more male family members migrate outside of rural areas, predominately Tbilisi, and outside of the country to search of work, the number of households headed by women is increasing. Overall, and especially in rural areas, households headed by women with children are particularly

vulnerable to poverty, as rural women generally have fewer employment opportunities and comparatively lower wage levels. A breakdown in social services and unreliable infrastructure of public utilities, due to the shifting economic and political situation, only make women's burdens even heavier.

Research Questions and Approach

For many women, especially those in the rural areas within Georgia, the response to the current economic pressures have been to migrate to urban centers to seek employment in urban centers, predominately Tbilisi, away from their family and kinship networks. In light of this response to the national transition, three questions arise: What are the women's reasons for migrating to Tbilisi? How have these rural women experienced this migration? And, in what ways does this migration affect their traditional safety nets available through extended kinship networks?

The second question must be addressed further, as migration occurs in many forms and for many reasons. This research is solely focused on voluntary internal migration, which can be defined as the decision of a person or group of people, such as a family, to move to another area within his or her home country. Since independence, Georgia has experienced large numbers of the population migrating out of the country. Many of the people involved in international migration are seeking better-paid employment or educational opportunities in Western Europe, Russia, or the United States. Another form of migration that has occurred in Georgia's recent history is forced migration, because of the conflicts that broke out in the early 1990s with Abkhazia and South Ossetia and then again with South Ossetia in 2008. Over 300,000 people (240,000 from the 1990s and another 60,000 from 2008), predominately Georgians, have been

internally displaced throughout Georgia, living in paltry conditions with little hope of returning if conflict continues (IDMC 2009). Forced migration is a tragic event and external, international migration is extreme; both phenomena are being well researched and documented, but both are beyond the scope of this research. This research seeks the little researched experience of the rural female migrant moving, within country, to Tbilisi for a better life.

In considering these questions, this thesis asserts that women's gender roles have guided them in their decisions to migrate and also that women's positions within the family and extended family structure are crucial to the maintenance of kinship safety nets. Previous research (Grigolia 1939; Dragadze 1988, 1993) on Georgian women has highlighted their historically powerful role within the context of families, but it has not connected it to the contemporary issues of migration or social networks. A more in-depth examination into women's roles and positions within their societal and familial spheres is critical in understanding their reasons for and experiences with rural to urban migration.

Through in-depth interviews with migrants and historical contextualization of gender roles, this research illustrates women's roles in migration and the maintenance of social networks throughout the migration process. It is strongly focused on the narratives by the migrants themselves. As this research is based within feminist geography, which views migrants' "interpretations of place and self as lenses which, albeit partial and interpretively complex, can reveal important aspects of the ways that broader structures are mediated into particular distillations of place and self " (Silvey 2006, 71). Furthermore, to fully situate these perspectives in their social and cultural context, this thesis provides an historical examination of women's gender roles and their position

within private and public space. Investigating where society has placed women and how this placement has affected women in the intertwined private and public spaces is critical to understanding their personal experiences. The Personal Narratives Group, a feminist research group that believes in the importance of obtaining personal experiences, as well as framing the context that surrounds these experiences: historically, culturally, and spatially. The group (1989, 19), notes:

> Acknowledging the centrality and complexity of context reveals the range of experiences and expectations within which women live, and provides a vital perspective from which to interpret women's ways of navigating the weave of relationships and structures, which constitute their worlds.

As context and experience are entwined in a dynamic process, it is critical to understand both positions. This dual approach is crucial in demonstrating the migrants' motivations for and perceptions of migration, as well as women's role in the maintenance of kinship networks and safety nets.

Arrangement of the Thesis

This section provides a brief synopsis of what each chapter offers. Chapter II introduces the phenomenon of migration and draws on the large body of classical and feminist migration research. This chapter highlights the importance of these different frameworks of thought and how they can be overlapped for a more broad-based approach to the study of women migrants. Feminist theoretical approach to migration allows for an exploration of the linkages between gender, place, and place-based identities, when addressing the question of why women are migrating. This chapter demonstrates how a gender-based approach to the migration process illustrates the effects of scale, place, and identity provides a framework for this research. This chapter also provides an overview of migration research and social network studies in Georgia.

Chapter III provides the methodological framework for this research, which is based in feminist views of the importance of an individual's voice and perspective of her experiences of migration, while also highlighting the significance of situating migrants' perspectives in a wider social and cultural context. This chapter explains why qualitative methods and in-depth interviews in particular are critical for answering the research questions. In addition, this chapter presents a narrative of the field through a description of Georgia and Tbilisi as the location for study, as well as an explanation of the methods and data sources used in this research. Finally, in the continuation of feminist theoretical tradition, this chapter provides examples of the methodological dilemmas that emerged during my research.

To situate Georgian women's responses to their current challenges within broader historical context, Chapter IV provides an historical overview of women's roles in Georgia. This chapter examines the formation of women's continuous roles from ancient female figures to the influence of Soviet institutionalized gender equality, and through years of war following independence. Throughout the chapter, there is an emphasis on the development of the private and public spheres and the effects on women's roles and positions in society. Chapter IV also introduces the cultural and social significance of the mother, motherhood and motherland, and their influence over women's roles today. The purpose of Chapter IV is to answer three questions: How are the choices women are making today, for example rural-to-urban migration, influenced by those historic roles? How might those roles be aiding in the survival of families? How are these gendered roles affecting their experiences in the urban milieu?

Finally, Chapter V focuses on the experiences of the migrant, the process of migration, and the use of social networks for support. This chapter provides a definition of social networks and safety nets, as well as the significance of this social structure in Georgian society. Through detailed participant narratives and examples, this chapter investigates the defining issues regarding the necessity and composition of social networks, as well as the support or social capital that is exchanged as narrated by the participants. In addition, this chapter examines the spatial transition that occurs when moving from rural to urban setting and how migrants' networks assist in this socio-spatial transition to dramatically different situation. This chapter also addresses the issues of the connection and disconnection of the migrants with the rural family they left behind, illustrating the sometimes-difficult balance kept (or not kept) between the old rural life and the new urban life. In addition, this chapter introduces the term *sheni ch'irime*, or give me your suffering, to exemplify the cultural importance of these safety nets and helping those in need. This term was brought up in several interviews to exemplify the support systems that fellow migrants employed to assist each other.

The concluding chapter ties the previous chapters together and describes why this research is important. This little researched phenomenon of internal migration in Georgia provides an investigation into the role of women in society and the positions they play in family and community. An historical examination of women in Georgian society shows that women are critical in the continuation of Georgian culture and the roles perpetuated over time have led them to this decision to migrate. Personal migrant narratives used in this research provide an understanding of the effects of mobility on the socio-spatial dimensions of these women's lives and their use of social safety nets as a coping strategy.

The final section addresses this research's contribution to the field, as well as suggestions to guide future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The movement of individuals and families is a phenomenon that has and continues to affect societies and cultures. The term "migration" is used to quantify this movement of people. Migration is viewed as one of the defining global issues of the early twenty-first century, as a greater number of people are migrating today than at any other point in human history (IOM 2008). There are now an estimated 200 million people living outside their place of birth, which is approximately three percent of the world's population (IOM 2008). In order to understand the reasons for this movement, geographers classify migration using several different criteria dealing with scale, time, distance, causes, aims, number, and social organization of migrants. The study of migration is the attempt to establish the motives, direction, and intensities of population movements. In addition, such research reveals the effects of these movements: the socio-economic, political, and cultural impacts; the changes in demographic structures; and environmental changes in the areas of exit and entrance. Much of the academic research on migration has been conducted in concert with international and governmental organizations to address policy concerns and move beyond the statistics of migration. Migration is one such event that aids in elucidating the social structures at all scales, from international and national to the village, household and even individual scale.

Academic research on migration is vast. Of importance here are two broad areas of migration research— neo-classical migration research and feminist theories of migration. Neo-classical migration research focuses on both micro- and macroeconomic

processes to examine and predict migration patterns of internal and international migration, with little attention paid to the migrants and the scales they pass through in the migration process (Arango 2000). Feminist migration studies, however, are centrally concerned with the social constructions of scale, the politics of connections between place and identity, and the perspectives of those within the process of migration (Silvey 2004). This research focuses on the migrant as an individual within the process of migration, bringing migration research to the smaller scales of community and household. This research builds upon and extends the work from these two bodies of migration literature: neo-classical, which quantifies movement and motives, and feminist theories of migration, which focuses on social politics and individual perspective.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section introduces the broader migration theories based in the neo-classical and economic migration school of thought. This section provides previous migration research conducted in Georgia as a case study for this research framework. The second section charts out the core concepts of feminist migration theory and how the process and migrants, as a social category, have been conceptualized in the recent decades. Specifically, the review draws on key research in the field of feminist migration studies, in an effort to situate this study within a theoretical context. In addition, this body of literature emphasizes the importance of examining migrants' social capital and safety nets in the migration and settlement processes. The final portion of this chapter illustrates the research conducted in Georgia on social networks and safety nets. An argument is made for the use of feminist theories of migration to analyze the experiences and effects of migration on Georgian women and their families.

Explanation of Migration

In an attempt to explain and predict migration patterns both within and between nations Ernest George Ravenstein, wrote *Laws of Migration* in 1885, which became one of the founding theories of migration studies. Ravenstein's stated eleven "laws" integrate migration into economic, social, and behavioral theories, for example "the majority of migrants go only a short distance," "the natives of towns are less migratory than those of rural areas," and "females are more migratory than males within their country of birth, but males more frequently venture beyond" (Ravenstein 1885). Ravenstein's laws have been modified by later research, as with Grigg (1977).

In its macro perspective, migration is seen as the result of uneven distribution of labor and capital, meaning workers tend to migrate from areas where labor is abundant and wages low to a labor scarce area where wages are high (Ranis and Fei 1961). The first theory about migration, and probably the most influential, was the theory of migration that originated from neo-classical economics, based on such views as "rational choice, utility maximization, expected net returns, factor mobility and wage differentials" (Arango 2000, 284). This theory's position is that the origin of migration is found in the disparities in wage rates between areas, which in turn reflect income and welfare disparities. It then must be asked why individuals respond to these differences by engaging in migration? The answer is provided by the micro-version of the neo-classical theory, in which migration is the result of an individual's decision to improve his/her welfare by moving to a place where he/she will be paid better for his/her labor (Todaro 1969). However, this theory has often been criticized for its overgeneralizations, as noted by Arango (2000, 287):

> [I]t downplays non-economic factors (particularly cultural determinants, bound to be influential in such an existential decision as migration), it mechanically reduces the determinants of migration, treats migrants and societies as if they were homogeneous, and its perspective is static. In addition, it equates migrants with workers, and disregards all migration that is not labor migration.

A more general theory of migration developed out of Ravenstein's *Laws* is the theory of "push" and "pull" factors, as elaborated early on by Lee (1966). The "push" factors are those life situations that give one a reason to be dissatisfied with their current locality; "pull" factors are those attributes of other places that make them appear appealing. Theoretical examples of these factors are that those who are better-educated feel pushed out of a rural area in order to find better urban opportunities, and that the pull of better jobs and urban lifestyle draw migrants to the cities. This theory does give the migrant some influence in his/her reasons for migrating and can allow for some heterogeneity. However, this theory is extremely simplistic and creates a dualism, when it is possible that these factors are intertwined to act as the catalyst for migration. The following section outlines internal migration in Georgia as a case study for twentieth century migration theory.

Migration Research in Georgia

Georgian geographers (Gachechiladze 1995; Gachechiladze and Bradshaw 1993, 1994; Zubiashvili and Tukhashvili 1996) explored internal migration in Georgia throughout the country's shifting political, economic, and social status within the framework of Ravenstein's *Laws of Migration*, Lee's push-pull factors, and a neo-classical, economic interpretation. Gachechilazde, Zubiashvili and Tukhashvili view migration trends in Georgia as a pendulum swinging back and forth with the population

flows. The pendulum shifts occur during major political and cultural shifts in the country: the 1940s-1950s with the increased Soviet urbanization and land collectivization and the 1990s with independence and civil war. The direction of the pendulum also marks the influences of those push-pull factors.

Internal mobility in Georgia has been apparent since the early 1930s, when industrialization acted as a pull-factor and collectivization of farmlands[3] in the rural areas as a push-factor (Gachechiladze 1995). With continued Soviet urbanization and industrialization policies, cities like Tbilisi grew at a steady rate. Gachechiladze (1995 67) states that this rural to urban migration increased in the 1950s, "when the whole rural population of the USSR [Union of Soviet Socialist Republics] underwent 'the second emancipation of serfs'[4] as the collective farmers were given internal passports that were denied to them by Stalin." With the freedom to move throughout the country, migrants were drawn to the larger cities (Tbilisi, Rustavi, Kutaisi, Batumi and Sokhumi) as a result of the increasing employment opportunities and newly constructed apartments. Most males moved into these larger urban areas to get work in the Soviet factories, as well as to attend universities. Gachchiladze notes that the movement of rural populations into the urban centers continued slowly throughout the Soviet era and into the early 1990s.

Georgian geographers followed internal migration statistics through independence and noted a brief two-year (1993-1994) spike in rural to urban migration. However, Gachechiladze, as well as Tamaz Zubiashvili and Mirian Tukhashvili (1996), found a

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[3] A policy pursued by Stalin in the 1930s that consolidated individual lands into one collective farm, *kolkhoz*. The intention was to increase food supplies for the urban population, to increase the supply of raw materials for the processing industry and to increase agricultural exports.

[4] The "first emancipation" occurred in 1861, when the Tsar's command abolished serfdom, a Russian system that tied the peasants irrevocably to their landlords. The "second emancipation" refers to the removal of restrictions on internal passports, which were designed to control internal population movement by binding a person to his or her permanent place of residence.

shift in migration in 1993 towards "ruralization" or urban-to-rural migration. Both migration researchers espoused that this sudden appeal in the rural landscape was based on land privatization, technical advances in farming, and greater autonomy for farmers as a result of national independence. Zubiashvili and Tukhashvili (1996) found that the Georgian economic crisis in the early 1990s had a greater impact on urban areas than on agricultural areas, thus reversing the pendulum for labor migration to rural areas. They explain that this trend can be justified by a number of factors including: a drastic reduction in urban employment leading to massive unemployment; a rise in transportation costs that exceed income, preventing a return to urban areas; and an increase in rural employment because of land reforms. This research shows the pull of employment in the rural areas and the push of expenses in the urban areas. Today, statistics show a shift, rural populations are slowly dwindling, with the rural population growth in 2006 at approximately -1 percent, due to people moving into the larger cities, predominately Tbilisi (IFAD 2006) . There is little research on current internal migration patterns in Georgia to explain the trend in continued rural to urban migration. Using neo-classical theory, one could posit that the increased investment in Georgia is leading to increased development in cities, thereby creating employment and housing opportunities for Georgians with little work in the rural areas.

Over the last several decades, geographers have shown that a major pull factor for migrants in Georgia is based on the availability of employment. However, this view does not fully answer some key questions of migration: How is this movement experienced? What are the effects of migration on the migrants themselves? Who is making the decision to migrate? Why are people migrating beyond labor reasons? Most of the

migration research in Georgia is based in economic migration theory and does not delve into the details of migration or the gendered relations within the process. The research previously conducted in Georgia neglects to investigate the deeper, more poignant questions that can only be attained from speaking with the migrants themselves. As Kutsche (1994, 217) comments on the political-economic explanations of migration, "statistics do not tell who will respond with grace and courage." This can only be achieved through asking the above questions to those who are in, or have been through, the migration process. Silvey and Lawson (1999, 126) note that much of the cultural and feminist geographic research on migration "focus[es] on the migrants as interpretive subjects of their own mobility, rather than as economically driven laborers responding to broader forces."

Gendered Geography of Migration

Only in the last two decades has feminist theory begun to influence the work of population or migration geographers. Feminist studies in migration have contributed to modifying a range of principle approaches to the structures, scales, subjects, and spatial logics at the foundation of geographic migration research. Much of migration research has positioned the migrant as a laborer, as an agent of economic modernization (Zelinsky 1971, Todaro 1969), or as a victim of shifts in the political economy (Kutsche 1994). These theorizations conceptualize migrants as genderless objects acting according to economic changes, rather than interpretive subjects of a geographical and social phenomenon. Silvey and Lawson (1999, 127) find that feminist theorists are questioning the former homogenized view of migrants for more complex migrant, one who must "negotiate and inhabit multiple subject positions, which in turn shape their mobility

decisions and experiences." This section of the chapter examines the critical contributions of feminist theory to migration studies as they apply to this research project. The concepts of gendered place, identities of women, and power relations within scales are outlined. This section also provides a detailed look into social networks and safety nets as a coping strategy for migrants and how they have been researched in Georgia.

Recent assessments of migration studies by feminist and gender geographers (Silvey and Lawson 1999; Silvey 2001; Silvey and Elmhirst 2003; Silvey 2004) illustrate that as Silvey notes, "feminist migration studies can play a pivotal role in the ongoing project of marrying the materialist concerns of political economy to those of critical social theorists" (Silvey 2004, 1). Since feminist theory and research investigates the power laden, socially constructed, and gender-inflected nature of spatial scales, feminist theory has helped to explain the "political dynamics driving the feminization of both internal and international migration flows" (Silvey 2004, 2). The term "feminization of migration" does not necessarily refer to the change in percentages of women migrating; in fact, women have made up approximately forty-seven to fifty percent of the international migrants since the 1960s (Penson 2007). Instead, the term refers to the fact that men are increasingly unable to fulfill their traditional roles as the breadwinners to their families and the demand for female caregivers continues to rise in the industrialized countries, which has put pressure on women to seek new survival strategies for their families. The most poignant feature of female migration is the degree to which it is based on the exploitation and continued reproduction of gender inequalities by global capitalism, through traditional gender roles and gendered divisions of labor. Penson (2007, 4) states that "women are often 'selected' to migrate by their families based on the

expectation that they will sacrifice themselves to a greater degree than men for the welfare of their families – i.e., work harder, remit a higher proportion of their earnings, spend less on themselves, endure worse living conditions." The main role of destination countries in the feminization of migration is to promote, directly or indirectly, the immigration of particular groups according to the requirements of their labor markets; for the most part, the required work is "women's work," such as nannies, house cleaners and sex workers. Much of the feminist migration research is conducted in an effort to create a dialogue with policymakers and non-governmental agencies regarding these issues of sexism and exploitation.

Feminist geographers have also contributed to theorizing the gender politics of place as they are intertwined with identity. Massey (1994) conceptualizes the various social constructions of place as they are laid down over time to form the place today. Most importantly, these places and the place-based identities are always in process, as the spatial and the social have a dynamic relationship. Because of this important relationship, migration research that focuses on the questions of gendered places and identities views a migrant's voice as critical to the research. In Silvey's (2006, 71) review of feminist migration research, she describes the importance of the voice:

> [T]he migrant as produced through a range of intersecting forces and processes, and emphasizes the human agency migrants have in the production of places and identities. Feminist geography aims to take seriously migrants' own interpretations of place and self as lenses which, albeit partial and interpretively complex, can reveal important aspects of the ways that broader structures are mediated into particular distillations of place and self.

Furthermore, through understanding migrants' interpretations of self, place, and their process of migration, this work enhances the economic theories of push-pull factors.

Silvey's (1997) work with female migrants' own narratives in Indonesia highlights the point that "places are interpreted differently by women and men, and thereby shape mobility decisions in ways that are distinctly gendered" (Silvey and Lawson 1999, 124). Examining migrants' interpretations provides a more holistic understanding to the migration process and settlement period.

In addition to broadening the field of migration studies through feminist theory, issues of social capital and safety nets have been brought to the forefront of this research. Silvey and Elmhirst (2003, 867) combine their research on women migrant workers in Indonesia to "consider issues of gendered power relations within social networks… [they] focus on the ways that women contest, accommodate, and negotiate the gendered demands made through the social networks that connect them with their peers and their village-based families." They discuss issues such as the maintenance of differing socio-spatial networks (rural and urban) to "facilitate access to employment, as well as access by rural households to cash, and access by city-based migrants to agricultural produce" (Silvey and Elmhirst 2003, 867). Along with an examination of migrant women's safety nets is the concept of social capital and the gendered power struggles it may entail. In this work, social capital is defined as "the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures" (Bourdieu 1977; Coleman 1988; Portes 1998, cited in Silvey and Elmhirst 2003, 366). Silvey and Elmhirst (2003) suggest that studies of social capital must look within the socio-spatial networks to understand the ways that power relations shape women's and men's differential ability to turn social capital into forms of capital. This ability to turn social capital into capital is crucial for the survival of migrants.

To understand social networks and safety nets as a survival strategy for women and migrants I employ Melissa Gilbert's (2000) research in Worcester, Massachusetts on impoverished single women and their struggles to survive. Melissa Gilbert's (1997a; 1997; 1998; 2000) research examines women's social networks and survival strategies in relation to their rootedness within a community. Her work has shown that these women produce boundaries in urban space through the use of networks to create a job-housing-childcare combination that allows them to provide for their families. She first explored the creation and use of these social networks "as part of women's survival strategies" (Gilbert 2000, 70). Then, through a focus on the role of place-based personal networks in women's efforts to find work, childcare, and housing, Gilbert was able to analyze how spatial boundedness provides benefits and consequences. Gilbert (2000, 81) also examines the power relationships within social networks:

> Women's locations in different constellations of power relationships shape
> the spatial boundedness of their lives, the ways in which rootedness is
> used in survival strategies, and the ways in which spatial boundedness and
> rootedness may be enabling as well as constraining.

In Gilbert's research (2000), both longtime female residents of Worcester and recent female migrants use family networks to arrange housing, jobs and in most cases for childcare assistance. Gilbert's research (1998; 2000) showed that personal relationships with family, friends, and even neighbors are these single women's main source of social networks for survival.

Women, Family and Social Capital

In relation to the importance of social/personal networks in Georgian society, it must be understood that collectivism in this society is expressed in small groups, such as extended family, relatives, friends, and neighbors. In research conducted by Goodwin et

al. (2001), they found that collectivism is one of the defining characteristics of Georgian social culture, in which interpersonal relations are considered to be the highest priority. This means they have very full and intimate social support networks. In addition, Goodwin et al. (2001, 382) found that Georgians also have a high level of egalitarianism, which "reflects a commitment to promote the welfare of others, as expressed through the values of equality, freedom, and helpfulness." Overall, their research (2001, 387) found Georgia to be a "supportive and closely knit culture where work and family and social life complement one another."

Georgian anthropologist Tamara Dragadze's (1988; 1993; 1994) research supports the findings noted above in regards to family and support networks. Much of her research on Georgian family structures has shown that women are commonly viewed as the glue to families and Georgian society. While the Soviet regime was oppressive in most aspects, the Georgian culture of strong love of nation and extended family networks remained throughout. Dragadze (1993) suggests that it was the strong kinship networks that saved Georgia during those authoritarian years. During the Soviet regime, the "help of the kinswomen rather than increased labor saving gadgets or state care…permitted women to work outside the home successfully" (Dragadze 1993, 164). Throughout the seventy years of Soviet domination, Georgian society has maintained a strong network in which family and kinship ties are providing informal networks within the population in order to retain Georgian society and nation. Much of the social network and safety net research has shown that the mobilization of social support is one of a series of coping strategies employed during times of stress and transition, in response to government

oppression, profound transitions within society during independence, or the socio-economic changes associated with migration.

Summary

Just as people have different views on life, people have different views on their experience with migration. Through the use of feminist theories and techniques to analyze migrants' experiences with this phenomenon, a more contextualized understanding of the processes involved in migration can be attained. Although it may seem that neo-classical theory and feminist theory are incompatible, feminist theory builds upon the economic perspective, in particular the push-pull factors by creating a space for a more nuanced approach. This gives the research a wide base of reasoning that is crucial in developing the individualistic, narratives approach.

By examining the linkages between gender, place, and place-based identities, I address the question of why these women are migrating. Examining the gendered divisions of public and private spheres and Georgian kinship ties, I clarify the survival techniques these women employ during the migration process. This gender-based approach to the migration process, scales, place, and identity provides the framework for the following chapters. In the subsequent chapters, I trace the historic roles of women, their influence on women's choices to migrate, and how Georgian women employ those roles to aid in their survival.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

My translator and I entered Salome [mother] and Rusudan's [daughter] home and were greeted with unending Georgian hospitality. The younger children were lined up and ready to see 'the American.' Rusudan's little brother, no more than ten was prodded to speak in English, as he was learning in school. Instead of a quick in and out interview as I had thought, we were guided into the living room and a table full of food. After a half hour of eating, drinking, and chatting my translator, whom I had no idea could sing and play music, began to sing Georgian folk songs with Rusudan. It was lovely. … Quite unexpectedly, after we completed Salome's interview and were enjoying tea, Salome had Rusudan call other family that had migrated to Tbilisi, to speak with me. …After many 'Thank yous' and goodbye hugs, Salome gave us both a gift. If this is how they treat strangers, I now understand the infamous, if not mythical 'Georgian hospitality.'

Fieldnotes, October 2007

This research is positioned within a methodological framework that emphasizes the importance of an individual's voice and perspective of their experiences of migration. In addition, this research seeks to situate these female migrants, in a wider social and cultural world through an examination of their historical and sociospatial contexts. The quote above emphasizes this holistic approach of merging an individual's voice, gaining knowledge of her space, the home, and the historical positionality of women as hospitable caretakers. It was during this interview session that I realized the importance of qualitative methods and in particular in-depth interviews for gaining a stronger perspective on a social phenomenon. Had I conducted a survey or focus group, I do not think I would have had the pleasure of this experience. In some ways, I gained far more from this meeting than from some of the questions I asked. It was at this point that I realized many of the main themes of my research: the strength of the Georgian woman;

the significance of traditions; the care and hospitality of this culture; and above all, the importance of family. As a geographer being able to enter the home, this private space, I was able to observe the level to which this space is a "woman's space." In addition, I was able to experience the safety net dynamic in action, as Salome called on her social networks of family in the neighborhood to come speak with me. I was invited to their home as a guest, rather than a researcher, which yielded more context for my study than I could have anticipated.

This chapter is organized in four sections to illustrate the process of research: (1) methodological approach, (2) selection of my field site, (3) a description of methods and data sources, and (4) the methodological dilemmas and limitations. This chapter begins with a discussion of the methodological approach and how it is rooted in recent research in feminist migration geography, followed by an explanation of how qualitative methods, and in-depth interviews in particular, are critical for answering the research question. The next section presents a description of Georgia, more specifically Tbilisi, as my location for study. The third section provides an explanation of the methods and data sources employed in this research conducted in Tbilisi over a five month period (September 2007 to January 2008). This study is composed of three research methods: (1) in-depth interviews with rural migrant women; (2) participant observation of life in Tbilisi; and (3) secondary data analysis to provide contextual research on historical and social trends in Georgian society. Finally, this chapter provides examples of methodological dilemmas that emerged during my research, despite my best efforts to minimize them. Such issues must be discussed because, as Diane Wolf (1996, 2) notes,

"many of these dilemmas and contradictions directly challenge the underlying tenets of [feminist] beliefs," from which this research is positioned.

Methodological Approach of Feminist Research

To examine the process of migration, experience in the urban environment and the coping strategies used by female migrants, I draw on feminist geographic methodology. Such an examination requires an analysis of the daily interactions, values, and practices of the migrant women. At the basis of feminist methodology is the importance of hearing the voice of the respondents. This voice is best obtained through the qualitative methods of in-depth interviews and participant observation.

To achieve the personal voice of the respondents, this research utilizes feminist theory as a lens to focus on the individual migrants' perspectives on their experience. Specifically, the methodology is a blend of Haraway's (1988) concept of *situated knowledge* with Harding's (1991) *standpoint theory*, because both theories allow for multiple perspectives or truths. Haraway (1988) believes that through situated knowledges, we must reject the all-encompassing notion of truth in favor of context specific and situation-sensitive knowledges. In other words, situated knowledge assumes individuals have many positions within different frameworks of power, race, class and gender. Situated knowledge also requires the knower, in this case the migrant woman, to be accountable for what she knows with respect to her positions, which is akin to Gillian Rose's (1993, 14) evocation of feminist geography, to be "centered on women as knowledgeable, as knowing their own geographies," despite their level of education and socio-economic status.

In addition, standpoint theory also is rooted in an understanding that multiple perspectives are valid as long as they are genuinely held by people coming from the different standpoints (Harding 1991). Such scientific inquiry requires a wider selection of questions, perspectives, and interpretations, as can be achieved with quantitative methods. Qualitative methods assume the world to be a collection of differing social constructions, representations, and performances or as Smith (2001, 25) states "they testify to the power relations, struggles, and negotiations that allow particular versions and visions of the world to be realized in particular places at particular times." In terms of this research, it is the version and vision of internal migrant women in the city of Tbilisi that is realized.

Georgia as a Research Site

I began to learn about Georgia in an introductory course on the post-Soviet Caucasus;[5] it spanned the massive breadth of history, geopolitics, and culture of the three countries known as the Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Although initially drawn to all three countries, it was the overall appeal of Georgia, with its mountains, large urban center, deeply steeped Georgian orthodoxy, the Black Sea, gender ideologies of warring men and strong women, that drew me to research more about this tiny country. In addition, a major draw to this region is the simple fact that these countries had to start over in 1991, the people had to find their footing in a new government, a new economy, and the fast flood of a Westernized culture. Georgia is a country of strong traditions, and these traditions have maintained them as a cohesive people throughout the Soviet domination and the early years of independence. These cultural traditions are still an influential presence in many Georgians' lives today.

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[5] This course was taught by visiting scholar Thomas Goltz at The University of Montana.

City of Tbilisi

Tbilisi is the bridge between Georgia's cultural traditions and the gateway to new horizons, as it maintains the title of "cultural capital" and upholds its job as a sophisticated, growing global city. As the capital of the Republic of Georgia, it is a highly populated urban center of 1.2 million residents (Figure 3.1). There are people of various socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds throughout this diverse city. Georgian geographer Revaz Gachechiladze (1995) has remarked on the importance of Tbilisi, through the language:

> Since medieval times up to the nineteenth century (and, by inertia, for a certain period in the twentieth century) the term "city" and the popular name of Tbilisi (both *kalaki* - in Georgian) were the same, meaning that Tbilisi was of special significance for the Georgians.

Tbilisi plays the role of "melting pot" of the Georgian nation. Georgia for centuries has been a multi-ethnic country, and Tbilisi has been the magnifying glass into that diversity. This diversity is the result of past generations of migrants settling in the city from different ethnic groups, including Abkhaz, Ossetian, Azeri, Greek, Jewish, Kurdish, Russian, Ukrainian and most recently Chinese.
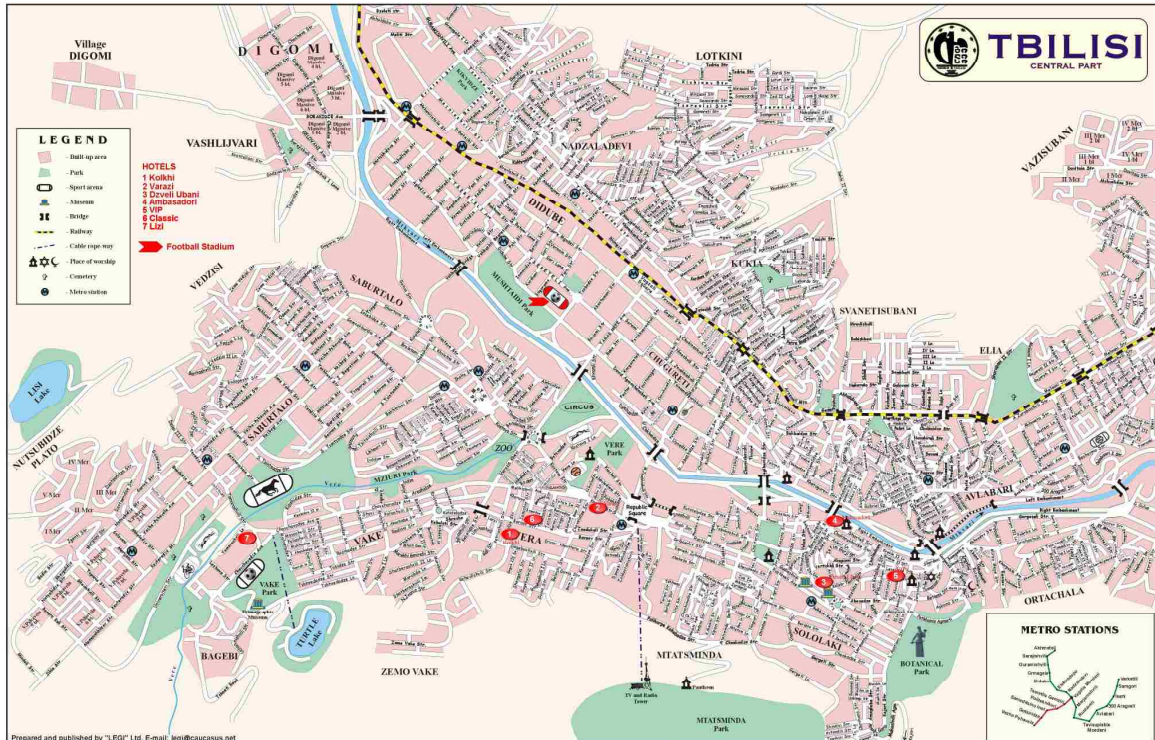
Figure 3.1: Map of Tbilisi (Source: AGC 2007)

With its large population, approximately one-third of that of the country, and small-developed area, the density and diversity levels in Tbilisi are high (Figure 3.2). Since Tbilisi is more populated than any single province of Georgia, the *Tbiliseli*, a Tbilisi resident, has become a "supre-regional term which embraces representatives of all Georgian sub-ethnic groups and ethnic non-Georgians" (Gachechiladze, 1997). More specifically, I selected Tbilisi as a research setting for a number of reasons, including, the high levels of migration from rural areas, the rural to urban spatial difference, and the university and departmental connections in the region. Although most of the migration occurring in Georgia is external migration out of Georgia, there are a significant number of migrants flowing into the city from the impoverished rural regions.

Figure 3.2: Old Tbilisi district along the Mtkvari River (Photo: L. Cahill 2008)

The difference in landscape between Tbilisi and the rural regions in Georgia is quite

dramatic. This difference is the result of the Soviet urbanization policies, which pushed

for fast growth in urban centers, in both housing and industry (Chapter V). Finally, The

University of Montana has a partnership exchange with the Tbilisi Institute of Asia and

Africa (TIAA), where Dr. Christiane von Reichert and Dr. Sarah Halvorson of The

University of Montana have visited for extended periods. This connection to Montana

and our department provided some instant key informants for my research and gave me

the opportunity to study the language and history more formally.

Methods and Data Sources

The intention and goal of the methods within this research was to attain individual voices, to maintain the authenticity of those voices, and to understand the context of each voice as holistically as possible. To achieve these goals, I employed four techniques: I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with nine women, I kept thorough field notes of daily interactions with Tbilisi, I took part in informal conversations and in-country travel, and I obtained secondary sources on statistics, urban structure, and gender roles.

Individual Voices

I utilized in-depth, semi-structured interviews in order to maintain the integrity of Harding's and Haraway's concepts of specific and situation-sensitive knowledges. The initial format of the interview questionnaire was based on pilot interviews I conducted with Georgian women living in Missoula, MT (Appendix A). This enabled me to gain a higher level of relevancy in my questions and assess themes that might be of further interest. Once in the field I employed a grounded theory model in which to structure the interview format. Based on Kathy Charmaz's (2004) interpretation of the grounded theory for qualitative research, analysis starts with the data and remains close, molding each interview based on the responses given to the questions. As Charmaz (2004, 500) noted in her chapter on grounded theory in the book *Approaches to Qualitative Research*, "simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis means that the research's emerging analysis shapes…data collection procedures." In other words, the first interview questionnaire (Appendix B) was formulated from the pilot interviews, but continued to change in each interview based on the themes that arose or lacked in relevancy (Appendix C).

Once on the ground in Tbilisi, I employed a purposive, snowball sampling method to identify study participants. With the few informants I had initially, this sampling method allowed me to identify life stories of interest from the informants and first interviewees who knew people with migration stories and would make good interview subjects. Although saturation is ideal, it was not the goal of this research; the goal of this research was to capture a range of perspectives. I sought out migrant women of different ages, different ages at the time of migration, different lengths of time in Tbilisi, as well as different educational levels and careers (Appendix D).[6] Initially, I hoped to focus on women from a region with the highest rate of rural to urban migration, but I was unable to find that specific statistic for internal migration. Instead, I attained a sample population whose origins are split, five from western Georgia and four from eastern Georgia. I found I had little control over the process of sample selection as Georgia is a very small country and relatives' lives are highly intertwined, as noted in the opening vignette of this chapter. In this, Salome called on friends and family to come and be interviewed by me. At first I was worried about a potential bias of my sample, but the more I interviewed the four related women the more I began to see my core research themes arise, those of the importance of family and women as the center of social dynamics.

The interviews themselves were fluid conversations that were conducted with the assistance of an interpreter. Initial contact of the interview respondents was predominantly made through my translators,[7] depending on the respondents' comfort level with English. I conducted five interviews in Georgian and four interviews in

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[6] I have used pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality.
[7] Due to time constraints with multiple jobs and family, I employed two translators.

English, which were by far the longest and most detailed. I allowed the respondents the choice of the interview location, which gave them control and a sense of security during the research process. Most women chose their home, which allowed me to see their homes and families, which for a geographer is critical in understanding why this space is important and why this space is considered a woman's space. The opening vignette highlights this spatial dynamic of the home for Georgian women as the heart of the family's social and cultural traditional with music, traditional foods and, of course, hospitality. This vignette also highlights the position of a woman in her home and in her community. During this interview there was no husband or other men present (besides Salome's ten-year-old son) and Salome took control of my situation in needing more interview subjects by having Rusudan (her daughter) call other migrant family members to come speak with me. A women's position in the private sphere, her home and her community, is discussed in further detail in Chapters IV and V.

Entering their homes also put me in the position of a guest. This position helped mitigate the power structure between "the researched" and "the researcher." In addition to my position as a guest in their home and the high level of Georgian hospitality, they wanted to help me and give me more information. One could label the level of hospitality and assistance as a sense of obligation to help me, the guest, but I never asked for more than they were willing to give. I believe they would have stopped the interview if they were not comfortable to continue. As was culturally appropriate, the interviews began informally with food and drawn out introductions. These introductions or "pre-interviews" began with a conversation about myself and my interpreter, including such topics as family, marital status, children, and my time in Georgia. Having this pre-

interview with me made their interview questions flow more easily and more like a conversation. It also allowed them to not feel like a subject of study, but more like people getting to know and understand each other. This format was more familiar to them and assisted in the mitigation of the power in research as it allowed me to give them something of myself.

Context of the Voice

In order to situate the stories of the migrant women within the context of the urban landscape, gender roles, and Georgian society, I conducted participant observation on several levels. I took extensive field notes of my daily life negotiating the city with other women, travels throughout the country, and visits to people's homes, both urban and rural. As Karen Nairn (2002, 149) espouses "participant observation delve[s] beneath the surfaces of observed phenomena in order to seek out the meanings and intentions which produce it." Although I did not get to participate in the phenomena of migration, I did live in the city on my own as these migrants lived, I moved about the city as Georgians do on a daily basis, and asked for help from my Georgian friends as migrants do. During these moments, I asked myself questions in order to understand the phenomena I was observing, which became my daily field notes. Many times a question became the topic of informal conversations with my interpreters and friends in order to clarify its meaning. In addition, my travels throughout the country allowed me to experience the world outside of Tbilisi. To understand the relationships and interaction as they carry over into place of origin, I spent several weekends traveling to the homes of friends and interviewees, which revealed certain cultural attitudes and traditions.

To gain further knowledge about the world surrounding these migrant women I employed secondary data sources to provide background to further contextualize the research and triangulate women's own perspectives on survival techniques throughout the phenomenon of migration. Most of the secondary research provided the historical background needed to analyze women's gender roles (Chapter IV). Since the collapse of the Soviet Union there is significant research on the post-Soviet states (Caucasus and Central Asia) regarding women and their struggles with the political, economic, and social transition. However, little academic research (in English) on women and gender issues in relation to urban geography and migration has been undertaken in the Republic of Georgia. The two primary Georgian scholars drawn upon in this research, geographer Revaz Gachechiladze (1993, 1994, 1995) and anthropologist Tamara Dragadze (1988, 1993, 1997), provided background on migration and gender relations (respectively) in the Soviet and early independence eras in Georgian history. In terms of statistical data, the Georgian government and several non-governmental organizations have extensive statistics on these basic poverty, migration and development indicators. There is much research on international migration of Georgians, but nothing on current internal migration statistics (although Gachechiladze's (1994, 1997) work on migration in the 1980s and 1990s has helped to elucidate the themes in migration today). While this statistical and contextual data provides general information on women's position in the Georgian economy, as well as the trends in international migration, there is little detailed research on internal migration or migrant women's daily struggles with urban family life in Tbilisi. In order to understand the nuances of these women's daily challenges and techniques for survival, personal accounts had to be collected and studied.

Dilemmas and Limitations

It is in this process of understanding the nuances of women's lives and survival

techniques through personal accounts that a researcher encounters dilemmas and meets

her limitations. Diane Wolf (1996, 1) best describes how these issues affect the

researcher:

> Feminist dilemmas in fieldwork are [ethical, academic and political]; they
> gnaw at our core, challenging our integrity, our work, and at times, the
> raison d'etre of our projects. Feminist dilemmas in fieldwork revolve
> around power, often displaying contradictory, difficult, and irreconcilable
> positions for the researcher.

Despite my best efforts to navigate the politics of fieldwork and minimize the power

relations between my interviewees and myself the methodological dilemmas occurred. In

addition to the empirical interest in research dilemmas, feminist research requires a

degree of transparency and recognition of potential bias; therefore, such issues must be

divulged and addressed. Dilemmas in qualitative research are common (Wolf 1996)

because of the nature of and intimacy of the relationship between the researcher and

researched. In cross-cultural research, such dilemmas can be more prevalent. These

situations have made me consider my positionality as the researcher and how I am

perceived in certain situations. The following three examples illustrate the different

areas, personal, cultural, and methodological, in which dilemmas can occur in fieldwork.

Personal Positionality

Before I left for Georgia, I was told by two of my preliminary interviewees to tell

everyone in Georgia that I was married. I was told that few except the younger

generations would understand my five-year committed relationship. En route to Georgia

I moved my grandmother's wedding band to the traditional Georgian wedding ring

finger, on my right hand, for safety reasons. I was told having a wedding band wards off

any unwanted attention from men and would help prevent my interviewees from trying to

marry me to their sons, brothers and cousins. Upon arrival I never thought that saying I

was married would be an issue, except that I soon realized that for Georgian women

being a wife is the second best thing in the world (being a mother, which I am not, was

first). At first, I was fine with answering the "Are you married?" question or even the

"How can you bear to be away from him?", but then came the "How long?" and "Why

don't you have children?" I felt horrible lying to women that were being so honest with

me. Halfway through my research, I ended up telling my interpreters, who had now

become my friends, that I was not really married and they understood completely both

the nature of my relationship and why I had lied. I also divulged my secret to Rusudan,

the youngest woman I interviewed and had become close to, not only did she understand,

but she divulged her secret boyfriend to me. This dilemma opened my eyes to how

gender defined roles create social pressure and social expectations, so unlike those I

experience in the United States. Through my marital lie, I was forced to confront this

unfamiliar gendered terrain, thus, compromising my own ethics. Yet, this experience

also allowed me to identify with the social realities of my study participants.

Being American

> My mother and I, wish you happiness in your life. She told me that,
> you've changed her thoughts about Americans! Really! She would never
> have imagined that Americans were so nice, honest, diligent and
> intelligent. I'm also glad to hear of the progress in your work. You know
> that we are cheering for you!
> <div align="right">Letter from Rusudan, February 2008</div>

It is a lovely thoughtful letter. However, what struck me as a researcher was her

mother's perception of Americans and that she "would never have imagined that

Americans were so nice, honest, diligent and intelligent." This was not the first encounter with such negative stereotyping towards Americans. In the interview with Keti, a fifty-year-old widow, when asked, "Who asks you for help?" she insisted that no one ever has to ask, she just helps however she can. I thought that was very nice and she seemed like a very helpful person, but at some point someone must ask for her help. She repeatedly told me that I would not understand helping people, I would not understand Georgian hospitality, nor would I understand the concept of wanting to take someone's pain away.[8] Later I spoke with my interpreter, Khatia, about Keti's insistence in my inability to understand helping people, Khatia told me it was because I am American and Keti was raised during the Soviet era when they were taught that Americans were evil and hated each other. I was the first American Keti had ever met, I was nothing but kind to her (as she was to me), but it did not matter as the decades of Soviet socialization told her I was an uncaring American. Decades of geopolitical tensions and media campaigns have shaped what it means to be an American and as a result, have shaped my experience as an American conducting research in a post-Soviet country. Can it be possible to bridge the gap of Cold War propaganda and history through positive interactions between the two (socially constructed) sides?

Lost in Translation

Methodologically, I encountered the language barrier dilemma, which required me to rework my data collection process during the fieldwork. As in many cross-cultural studies, there can be a difficult language barrier. With Georgian language in particular it can be difficult to translate into English, as Georgian is a more poetic and indirect language, unlike the more directly spoken English. Once I arrived in Tbilisi, I had my

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[8] This idea, *sheni ch'irime*, is described in further detail in Chapter V

interview questions translated into Georgian to assist an interpreter in the interview process. Shortly after I began conducting interviews, I could not figure out why I was not getting more information about where the women had come from. The question as written in English asks, "Describe where you are from," but I was only getting one-word answers. After asking a Georgian friend to retranslate, I found that the question was translated as simply "Where are you from?" This was not a difficult issue and was solved by follow up questions and then a correction of the question. Nevertheless, this made me think about the quality of the translation. With the difficulties in Georgian-English translation, was I getting a complete and exact translation or was my translator summarizing for my "benefit"? To compensate I used additional methods, participant observation and secondary source research, to validate the interview responses. Ultimately, my understanding and translation provides only a partial picture.

Summary

This chapter outlines the methodological approach to the study of women and migration in Tbilisi. Through the qualitative methodological techniques employed, this research seeks the individual voice and perspective of the migrants' nuanced experiences. The chapter then describes Tbilisi as a field site and illustrates its position as a global city, as well as, an important cultural and economic center for Georgians. The third section of this chapter provides an explanation for the methods and data collection techniques used. This section illustrates the significance of triangulation through multiple methods— interviews, secondary data, and participant observation— to obtain a richness to the data. Finally, the chapter addresses the importance of divulging the limitations and dilemmas met in the research process.

CHAPTER IV

WOMEN'S ROLES IN GEORGIAN SOCIETY: HISTORY,

IDEOLOGY AND MODERNITY

Introduction

Understanding the historical context that shapes the position and status of women in Georgian culture and society is critical in understanding their responses to their current challenges. An historical overview of Georgian women's roles from pre-Soviet times through the Soviet era will aid in building an understanding of how women are coping with the economic, cultural, and social transitions since Georgian independence in 1991. Throughout the recent history of Georgia, women have maintained seemingly different positions within public society; however, their private roles have remained continuous, which for many has aided them during the drastic economic, political, and social transitions. Throughout history women's roles, especially in their social position as mothers, have been five fold: the keepers of religion and nation, peacekeepers, matriarchs, guardians of literacy, and the social and cultural links for the family.

This chapter aims to explain Georgian women's current position in society in relation to their past roles, and to gain perspective on how and why these past roles replay throughout history. The chapter begins with an introduction of two figures that have shaped how women are viewed in Georgian society throughout the ages, Saint Nino and Queen Tamar. The chapter then provides an assessment of women's position in the private and public spheres and how the private sphere is enlarged in Georgia's extended kinship networks. The chapter will then investigate the influence of the Soviet sense of empowerment for women on traditional Georgian ideologies of gender and the double

burden of the roles of "worker" and "mother" that were constructed by this regime. Finally, the chapter examines women's difficult positions as peacekeeper and breadwinner, since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Georgian independence, a time in which the Georgian people are now confronting many challenges and hardships because of this drastic economic, political, and social transition. Due to these hardships, many are having to migrate out of their rural homes and into the city to provide more for their families, where they believe there is better education and better careers. This current shift in spatial dimension is where this research lies, in how these rural women are experiencing urban life as Georgians, women, mothers, and rural migrants. The purpose of this chapter is to sew a historical thread of gendered roles and perspectives in an effort to answer the following questions: How are the choices women are making today, for example rural-to-urban migration, influenced by those historic roles? How might those roles be aiding in the survival and support structure of families? How are these gendered roles affecting their experiences in the urban milieu?

The Saint and the Queen: Keepers of Religion and Nation

To this day, two of the most influential figures in Georgian history are Saint Nino and Queen Tamar. Their celebrated stories and subsequent beatification have established the proper roles of women in Georgian society. The story of Saint Nino (Figure 4.1) has been embellished over the centuries, but there is evidence that she was present in the ancient Georgian Kingdom of Iberia[9] in about 320 CE. According to one legend, Nino received a vision in which the Virgin Mary gave her a grapevine cross and told her to go to Iberia and tell the people of the good tidings of the gospel of Christ. Another legend

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[9] Also referred as Caucasian Iberia, was the name given by the ancient Greeks and Romans to the Georgian kingdom of Kartli (4th century BCE-5th century CE), roughly to the eastern and southern parts of the present day Georgia.

depicts Nino as a simple slave girl from Jerusalem who prayed to God to save a village women's sick child. As word spread of this girl's miracle, Queen Nana of Iberia requested the audience of Nino to cure her illness. When the Queen was cured, she baptized herself Christian, with the country of Iberia and her King Mirian to follow.

Figure 4.1: Georgian iconography of Saint Nino (Photos: L. Cahill 2009)

Saint Nino initiated the construction of Svetitskhoveli Cathedral in the spiritual capital Mtskheta. It is also said that she spearheaded the hunt for Christ's last garments, which legend said, had been brought to Georgia, in addition, she appealed to Constantine the Great for more priests (Eastmond 1998). This association with the spiritual center and Christian leadership has made Nino the embodiment of Christian Georgia, making her a very nationalistic figure.

In addition, Saint Nino's image of purity and unwavering piety is an image placed on women that has been reproduced throughout Georgian history. This image of purity is often translated into an image of virginity, as Georgian women are expected to be at marriage. This purity also extends into a woman's sexuality, which in Georgian culture

should be muted, and her sensuality channeled into her love of babies and children

(Dragadze 1988). In addition, women have always been seen as the peacemakers and

often stopped the blood feuds and killings between hostile parties. This role is prominent

in Georgian culture, as Alexander Grigolia (1939, 127) stated in his dissertation *Custom*

and Justice in the Caucasus, "It is sufficient for a woman to take off her *mandili,*

women's headdress or shawl and put it before the feet of an enraged mountaineer, for he

is then obliged to put his brandishing dagger in the scabbard at once and retire." This

saintly role as peacemaker is evident in the recent past, as noted in Tamara Dragadze's

(1997) piece on thousands of Georgian women crossing into war torn Abkhazia in 1993

by train to ask for an end to the fighting and to look for their soldier sons.

King Giorgi III, a successor of David the Builder and unifier of the Georgian

nation, in 1178 crowned his daughter Tamar, co-ruler of Georgia, thus indicating his

chosen successor (Suny 1994). The beginning of her rule was fraught with struggles, as

it was uncustomary for a women to rule. Prior to his death Giorgi III led a campaign of

sorts to establish Tamar's position as future ruler of Georgia, through her visual

representation in churches. These images had to balance both her gender and power

through a more traditional male figure— her father— without denying her femininity. In

Eastmond's research (1997, 1998) on the imagery of royal Georgians, he stresses the

depiction of Tamar as both the strong, powerful successor for her father and a proper

image of a woman. For example, in the Church of the Dormition (Figure 4.2 and detail

Figure 4.3) Tamar is shown in dress and broad crown similar to her father's, showing her

strength and ability to rule and yet, her face is pale, as appropriate for a female aristocrat,
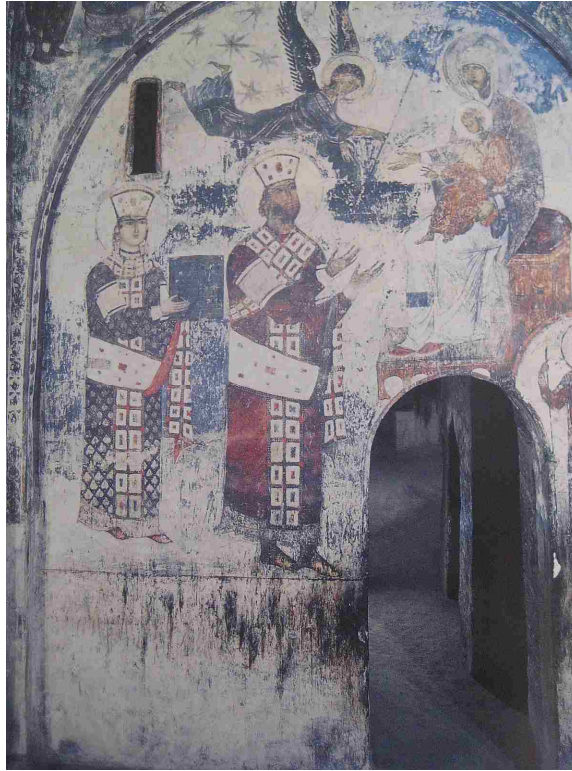
Figure 4.2: Queen Tamar and King Giorgi,
Church of the Dormition, Vardiza (Photo: L.Cahill 2009)

and stylized to conform to the Persian ideal of beauty. Eastmond (1998, 110) states that

Tamar's depiction as "the ideal of feminine beauty and as a strong traditional ruler may

seem contradictory, they do combine to present an image of her as unassailable," as she is

both the perfect female role model and embodies the traits of an ideal male ruler.

King Giorgi III died in 1184, leaving Tamar to rule Georgia for twenty-nine

years, the most successful period in Georgia's history. Her strength as a ruler was

solidified when Tamar was able to defeat the encroaching Muslim forces twice.

Figure 4.3: Georgian depictions of Queen Tamar. (Photos: L. Cahill 2009)

She was a much loved and revered queen. This time is seen as the culture zenith as advances were made in architecture, science, agriculture and literature. The most famous example of the literature of the time is Shota Rustaveli's epic poem, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, in which Rustaveli (verse 39, trans. Wardorp 1912, 22) wrote homage to the Queen:

> Though indeed she be a woman, still as sovereign she is begotten of God.
> She knows how to rule. We say not this to flatter you; we ourselves, in
> your absence. Often say so. Her deeds, like her radiance, are revealed
> bright as sunshine. The lion's whelps are equal, be they male or female.

This final line is significant because the Georgian aristocrats vehemently disagreed with King Giorgi's choice of Tamar, a woman, as king. Rustaveli's work along with other poetry and the church paintings helped to sway the Georgian aristocrats in favor of Tamar. As Grigolia (1930, 27) notes, "Queen Tamar and Giorgi Lasha [her son] were held in such high esteem by the people that they were deified and the churches built by them were dedicated to them and given their names."

Interestingly, as much as Queen Tamar was revered as a female ruler, she was called the *mepe* (king), not *dedopali* (queen), which was normally applied to a king's closest, senior female relative. It is interesting to note that in Georgian *mepe* means king or tsar, whereas *deda* is mother. It is unlikely that *mepe* was applied to Tamar solely due to her great achievements and personal abilities, but rather to set her apart from other women and thus a more acceptable (masculine?) ruler. Despite the pervasive use of *deda* in other culturally significant words, for example, one's own country is referred to as *dedasamshoblo*, "mother country," the Georgian language as *dedaena*, "mother-tongue," and Tbilisi, the capital city is *dedakalaki*, "mother city." Although Queen Tamar's traits gave her the informal title of *king*, the Georgian people believe "in the person of every Georgian mother, the country has its most zealous defenders of its sovereignty, its language and culture" (Grigolia 1939, 129). *Deda* or mother is a critically important notion in Georgia society, as the root of their culture, religion, and nationhood. David Kakabadze's 1918 painting *Imereti — My mother* combines the landscape of his home region of Imereti in the background with an image of his mother in the foreground. This joining of imagery is visual representation of this critically important connection of mother, motherhood, and the motherland in Georgian culture (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4: *Imereti — My Mother*, David Kakabadze, 1918.
(source:http://z-kkal.iatp.ge/page2e.html)

The importance of the mother for Georgian families and the extent to which motherhood

plays a role in migrant women's lives is critical to this research. One of Georgia's most

beloved poets Ilia Chavchavadze (1858) describes a mother's role during the trying times

under the Russian empire in his poem *To a Georgian Mother:*

> Ah here, O mother, is thy task,
> Thy sacred duty to thy land:
> Endow thy sons with spirits strong,
> With strength of heart and honor bright,
> Inspire them with fraternal love,
> To strive for freedom and for right;
> Infuse in them God's Gospel wise,
> Give them true courage for the fight,
> Thus enrich our land with sons
> Who'll change this darkness into light.
> O mother! Hear thy country's plea.

Chavchavadze's poem asks mothers, as a duty to the land, to endow their sons

with strong spirit, with strength, honor, fraternal love, piety, courage and the love of

freedom to enrich Georgian lands. The role of the mother is to raise families, and more

specifically, sons who are pious and faithful to their nation whether it is to revolt against

the Russian empire, to become a strong member of Soviet society, or to become educated

and attain a successful career. This role makes women the keepers of religion and nation,

as they produce the future generations. Motherhood is extremely important to all

Georgians, not just Georgian women. Motherhood is a goal and mothers are revered.

Niko Pirosmani's 1909 painting, *Childless Millionaire and Poor Woman Blessed with*

Children, exemplifies that wealth, especially for women, is measured in her capacity to

reproduce society (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5: *Childless Millionaire and Poor Woman Blessed with Children*, Niko
Pirosmani, 1909. (Source:artist-empire.com/naive_art.html)

The two iconic figures of Saint Nino and Queen Tamar have aided in the

construction of the roles by which Georgian women are viewed, as the keepers of the

religion and nation. Over the centuries, Nino and Tamar's images have been reproduced

in almost every church in Georgia and are sold at every street side iconography market

stands and religious stores, reinforcing their influence in women's roles. Eastmond (1997, 111) notes that both Saint Nino and Tamar "adhered to all the gendered virtues, of femininity: humility, love of mercy, devotion to family, faithfulness, hatred of violence and purity," yet both women also represent strong leaders, a typically male role. Georgian women today must also hold both of these socially constructed masculine and feminine traits, because for many the husband is absent or ineffective at parenting. Georgian women must "endow thy sons [and daughters] with spirits strong" and work outside the home to support her family, becoming a literal, labor *double burden*, but also a burden of the virtues she must maintain as a proper woman and mother. Throughout history, this double burden of gender roles in the public and private spheres has transitioned and grown with Georgia's changing social, political, and economic situation.

Women in Public and Private Space

The following section draws upon the ever-pervasive images of Nino and Tamar in conjunction with the transitioning Georgian society in order to examine women's position in the private and public spheres of Georgian society. This examination is akin to Massey's (1994, 14) understanding of places as a "combination of their succession of roles within a series of wider, national and international, spatial divisions of labor." This is often referred to as a "geologic metaphor," as it conceptualizes social relations and its interconnected layers with place as they are laid down over time, much like sedimentary rocks, to form the place today. Yet, these places and the place-based identities are always in process, as the spatial and the social have a dynamic relationship.

In Georgian society, life in the family has been highly gendered and the division of labor along gender lines was strong, but not rigid. Dragadze's research on Georgian

rural families and women's spaces (1988, 1993) illustrates that since time immemorial no woman has ever done heavy work in the fields, which is considered to be a man's job. Women will, however, help in the harvest, shell beans, or feed the animals. Traditionally, women will care for poultry and pigs and do light gardening in the plot by their courtyard, with the assistance of their male family members. Although most of her research is conducted in rural Georgia, many of the roles and spatial divisions carry over to urban life. For example Dragadze (1993, 159) states, "With the house, however, women have sole responsibility for all cleaning, cooking and care for clothes. Men will play with children but women attend to all other childcare. Thus, in the house, the division of labor according to sex is sharply defined and adhered to."

However, Georgian women and men are not confined to a particular space. Dragadze found that, "Women are as much a part of the 'outside' [public] space— employment, village, community life in the roads— as in the intimacy of the house, where they move and work everywhere" (159). Dragadze identifies the space where women connect and maintain relationships with their neighbors, friends, and relatives, as outside or public, but I argue that with the pervasive kinship networks, networks that can include distant cousins and friends as family, her community is within the private sphere. [10] I view the division of the public and private spheres in Georgia fall on the boundaries of kinship relations, however amorphous those relations are in Georgian society. For example, the headman of the family, usually the eldest male, has a higher position in public, in business and trade, predominately interactions outside of family and friends. On the other hand, the matriarch exercises almost absolute power over the members of the family and traditionally controls the family in it's cultural and social interactions with

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[10] The nature and importance of kinship and social networks will be discussed further in Chapter V.

the community. She establishes the family's role within a community, a role which has placed women, willing or not, at the forefront of family leadership through many societal transitions.

Women in Soviet Space

An important layer in the construction of place for Georgian women is that of the Soviet influence on society, culture, physical space, and gender roles. The Bolshevik soldiers marched into Tbilisi on February 25, 1921, ushering in the beginning of seventy years of Soviet rule in Georgia. Early Soviet policy in Georgia was disastrous. In the 1920s, over 1,500 churches, mosques, and synagogues were closed, their property seized and some destroyed, and the number of clergy decreased dramatically (Gachechiladze 1995). Collectivization of farmlands was instituted, with the Bolsheviks encouraging peasants to drive nobility and wealthy farmers off their land. Repression against the Georgian intellectuals increased as the mass purges began in the 1930s. This was a difficult time in Georgia as their religion, land, culture, and language were slowly being stripped away.

Figure 4.6: Soviet propaganda poster, 1974: "Soviet Women! Be the first in line for the national struggle to successfully fulfill the Five-Year Plan in four years!" (Source: http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989/items/show/21)

It was also during this time, that the Bolsheviks attempted to upgrade the status of women by changing, in the Soviet mind, the oppressive traditional gender roles by asserting the invaluable nature of women's work in building the new economy and in providing future workers. Throughout the socioeconomic transformation of Georgia under Stalin, women were requested to join in with the "building of socialism"(Figure 4.6); however, it was mostly because the economy needed cheap labor (Šiklová 1999). The number of workers in the economy had tripled in the Stalin years, "numbering over 600,000 in the early 1950, [of which] women made up forty percent of that number, a rise of fifteen percent since 1933" (Suny 1994, 280). While Soviet modernization initiated the means for women to enter the labor force, "the emancipation of women under the

socialist regime was made 'from the top'… and identified as the duty of women to work in some profession in addition to taking care of the children and the home" (Šiklová 1999, 154). Studies conducted in 1960s on gender and time budgeting found that men and women spent the same number of hours a week working, yet women spent over twice as much time as men performing housework (Lapidus 1978:270, in McKinney 2004, 40).

There was much pressure put on Soviet mothers, as there was little state investment in the industry of consumer household appliances and services that provide assistance with housework. In her article on mothers in Soviet and post-Soviet policy, McKinney (2004, 39) states, "the Soviet centrally planned socialist system should have been able to devote substantially more resources to the creation of human capital via investment in childcare, healthcare, and education." However, this system prioritized its goals differently, focusing on labor and industrialization while claiming that their progressive family policy was undercut by inadequate funding. The lack of assistance and the increased weight of their double burden forced mothers to look towards family, friends, and neighbors for help with childcare needs. In her research, *Sexual Division of Domestic Space among Soviet Minorities*, Tamara Dragadze (1993, 164) noted:

> Throughout the Soviet era in Georgia, the domestic pattern of space has remained untouched. … The sexual division of labor in the house has also remained more or less untouched. The [Bolshevik] Revolution has, of course, affected the position of women outside the home…Yet in both cases it is the help of the kinswomen rather than increased labor saving gadgets or state care which has permitted women to work outside the home successfully.

This emancipation in employment thrust women into the public sphere, beyond their private kin-based community, and it was the assistance of their female relatives that enabled women to maintain both roles of mother and worker in Soviet society.   In

addition, Dragadze (1988, 165) found that both sexes accepted women in positions of authority, as administrators, teachers, village council chairpersons and even collective – farm chairpersons, because "women use their traditional roles of authority, and display their allegedly innate wisdom and level headedness." This acceptance of women's authority, described earlier as headwoman, is not because of the way the Soviets defined women's roles, but because of their historic roles as the keepers of village and home.

Transition to Independence

At the end of the Soviet Union as the movement for independence grew and as relations with Abkhazia[11] grew tense, women took up the role of peacemakers. Georgian women's leadership in peace movements is "an appropriate ideological expression of their role in society, as nurturers, protectors, the givers of life," (Dragadze 1997, 251) which is drastically different from the universal Soviet role of the muscular proletariat defending her homeland in war. This dichotomy in roles played out with devastating effects on April 9, 1989, when the Soviet army massacred twenty people, including seventeen women, with sharpened spades in an effort to disperse anti-Soviet protesters on the steps of the Georgian parliament building. This unfortunate event along with the peace train rally into Abkhazia, exemplifies the shift in women's roles and an active attempt to change their public space. Dragadze (1997, 259) states that in this newly post-Soviet context "women were able to have recourse to their traditional roles to express their emotions and to attempt to play some part in the fateful events which had overtaken their country," just as Saint Nino and Queen Tamar would have done for their nation and people.

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[11] From 1988 to 1993, Georgia battled to maintain its territorial integrity over the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Both regions under Soviet rule were "semi-autonomous" under Georgian control, when Georgia declared independence, these regions did not agree and wanted to become fully autonomous.

Two years later on April 9, 1991, after a nationwide vote for independence, the

Supreme Council passed the Restoration of Independence Act, but this Act was not

official until the Soviet Union was formally dissolved on December 22, 1991

(Gachechiladze 1995). With a lack of political culture and democratic traditions, Georgia

fell victim to internal political crisis, as Gachechiladze (1995, 39) explains:

> Crisis was inevitable, because the established [Soviet] economic system
> had collapsed and the country was too dependent on the import of energy
> sources. … Once Russia imposed world prices on its fuel and raw
> materials, which had been imported earlier at a very low price, the
> industrial output of Georgia more that halved. Transport, industry and
> agriculture were seriously hindered by the shortage of fuel.

As Georgia's industry declined, many workers lost their jobs. Unfortunately, the

economic realities of the 1990s have seriously affected people's standard of living.

Unemployment rose sharply and food prices have reached astronomical levels. In

1993— one of the worst years economically— eighty percent of the people were

estimated to be living below the official poverty line (Gachechiladze 1997). Throughout

these trying times, the Georgian people relied on family and friends for support; for some

this meant relying on rural farming systems to provide food and some income through

trade.

During the Soviet period (1921-1991), almost fifty percent of those employed

were women. Since independence, the economic transition out of Communism has left

many women without work. Gender inequality, in terms of the accessibility of resources,

has become more acute in the transition into a market economy, and women's security

and the protection of their labor rights have become much worse. It was not until July

24, 2006 that the Georgian parliament adopted the state Concept on the Gender Equality.

With the assistance of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and several

gender-focused non-governmental organizations, the Georgian government (Parliament of Georgia 2006) now acknowledges the realities of gender discrimination, as stated:

> The Concept aims at securing the equal rights and opportunities for women and men and ensuring their efficient realization. It recognizes the principles of gender equality in all spheres of life and provides the framework for introducing and implementing measures for prevention and elimination of all forms of discrimination on the ground of sex and for the active pursuit of gender equality

Many women still struggle with gaining employment that meets their educational level, as many employers do not want to hire women that they feel will soon leave to have children. Many women are left to work within the home; the share of unpaid labor is higher amongst women than for men. In addition, those women in professional positions are paid less than their male counterparts. In the early 1990s, the average monthly salary of a woman was 75 percent of a man's average salary; in the late 1990s this wage gap was 52 percent and currently is estimated to be 48.6 percent (Tokmazishvili 2007, 54). These statistics along with an increasing role of women in unpaid labor in the household economy indicate a general pattern of gender discrimination in Georgia's labor market. A recent statistical report by the Georgian Department of Statistics (2008, 49) shows that the average monthly wages of women in 2007 was 264 GEL (Georgian Lari) or 160 USD less than men (Table 4.1).[12] In the dozen fields of employment sampled in the study men made more money that women, from a small margin in education (women 142 GEL/85 USD, men 189 GEL/115 USD) to the largest in the financial sector (women 793 GEL/482 USD, men 1239 GEL/754USD). This contrast in pay coupled with the fact that

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[12] It should be noted here that most Georgians do not make 160 USD per month. As such, the Georgian government statistics are taken to be rather unreliable. Nevertheless, based on Tokmazishvili's work the gender wage gap is apparent.

women and men have almost equal levels of education, exemplifies the patriarchic preference for the male (DSG 2008, 22).

	Women	Men
Agriculture	115	165
Manufacturing	155	258
Construction	239	386
Trade/Household repair	167	266
Hotels and restaurants	130	208
Transport/Communication	244	318
Financial sector	483	754
Real estate	189	303
Public administration	302	383
Education	86	115
Health/Social Assistance	137	211
Average total	**145**	**305**

Table 4.1: Average monthly wages (USD) for women and men, 2007
(Source: Department of Statistics 2008.)

This economic transition has negatively influenced both men and women. However, it has become evident that Georgian women are making a more concerted effort to support their families, due in part to women's historic role as the matriarchs of their families. This effort includes working in the informal sector of the economy, which is often combined with formal work in order to earn a sufficient income, or uprooting the family in order to find work in Tbilisi. As tradition dictates, the mother is the backbone of the family and the agent of social control and of the maintenance of order. As Dragadze (1988, 144) retells the folktale, when a woman becomes a mother "she is thought to become a tiger, ready fearlessly to attack anyone in order to protect her child."

Georgian's believe that just as Queen Tamar defends the Kingdom of Georgia, a Georgian mother would do anything for her children.

A Mothers' Duty: Migration

For many women throughout the post-Soviet states and within Georgia, the current economic pressures are driving them to seek employment in urban centers and in other countries, away from their family and kinship networks. In order to better provide for their children and attain jobs with improved pay, women in Georgia are moving to the capital city, Tbilisi. This section examines the draw in migrating to Tbilisi, for example, more educational opportunities and better chances for a career, and how these coupled with women's historic roles influence their decision to migrate.

As mentioned in Chapter II historically, the migration pendulum has favored the rural regions in Georgia, however, in the last ten years the migration pendulum has swung back towards rural to urban migration flows. Urban and rural lives in Georgia differ greatly. Urban life is characterized by a great variability of labor and better social infrastructure, educational opportunities and entertainment, not to mention the direct preference given by the Georgian government to urban settlements. Throughout the last seventeen years of independence the infrastructure and services in rural areas have dwindled, as they have exploded in the urban areas, in particular in Tbilisi. Tbilisi has seen difficult economic and political times, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and violent conflicts with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. There is no doubt that, it has never truly lost its multi-ethnic and even cosmopolitan flair, this city has remained a cultural and financial center for the region. As Georgia is speeding into a Westernized, free market economy Tbilisi has become the beacon of opportunity for Georgians.

Despite Tbilisi's tumultuous past, it has maintained an attraction to migrants as a cosmopolitan center for entertainment, culture, and education. However, it was not until the late 1990s with the economic and social turmoil, that it has become a destination for survival. Unfortunately, the loss of industry in the 1990s has still not recovered fully and is still making it difficult for people to find work, and the employment they do have generally pays poorly. Those jobs that are available are in the urban centers and predominately in Tbilisi. As the economy grows, so to does the attraction to Tbilisi as the place of culture, education, diversity, and most importantly opportunity. The following quotations from study participants highlight this notion of Tbilisi as a bastion for opportunity:

> [In] Tbilisi there were more opportunities for your career development, for your education, and for your experience. [Living in Tbilisi] gives you opportunity to grow and develop, to find the right job.
> -Makrine

> Two years ago, the question was should my parents let me come here alone, to live with somebody else, my relatives, but then we decided the whole family should move. Because with my brother and sister, they now have a lot of chances to live better, to get a high education, join events and competitions. I was going to a private school in the village and my sister also, but believe me the level of education in Tbilisi is much higher than it is in the village.
> -Rusudan

> [In Tbilisi] there are different activities that my children do, for example classical studies, dancing, and singing. The teachers here are much more qualified.
> -Tinatin

> I left [my village] because I really wanted to be a student of the State University in Tbilisi. That was the reason why I moved to Tbilisi and that was my dream from my childhood because Tbilisi State was the most famous university in Georgia.
> -Ana

These quotations bring forth the significance of education in Georgian society, as well as the opportunity to experience all that one can to achieve a satisfying career. It is important to note, that with the collapse of the Soviet Union, these goals of higher education, increased opportunities and a satisfying career, can really only be achieved in the large urban centers, in particular Tbilisi. Many of the factories that thrived in the rural areas are now defunct and desolate and many of the smaller communities cannot afford to keep their local schools stocked with good teachers. Since education has always been viewed as a crucial objective the many primary schools, secondary schools, and universities in Tbilisi are a huge draw for migrants. This is exemplified by, Salome and Tamara, as mothers who made the decision to leave their careers, families, and homes behind, move to Tbilisi, and care for their children. In both cases, they moved because they felt that the educational system was better and their children would be afforded better opportunities in Tbilisi, as they describe in their own words:

> My main aim is that my children are successful and not only in career, but in personality as well. I have three [degrees] and sit here alone and take care of my children, because I care about their future and I want them to have a high level of education.
>
> -Salome

> If you compare my life to when I lived in the village and had a job, of course it was better than this one. But I have done everything for my son, Irakli and when I think that way it is better. We wanted to get him into the city and a get him a better education.
>
> -Tamara

This draw or pull to Tbilisi for education, career, and opportunity is no different than any other large city full of migrants. Rather when looked at from a historical perspective the influence of Georgian women's past roles becomes apparent in their decision to stretch the capacity of their lives and home in order for their children to gain those three ambitions. As the folktale tells of the mother becoming a tiger to defend her children,

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throughout my time in Georgia I was told many times how families and in particular mothers will do anything for their children's happiness and success. Recalling her childhood days Ana told me that her mother went to classes and did homework for her brothers, simply because they did not like to go to school. Taking the opposite approach with her daughter Lali, Ana has been chastised by the other classmates' mothers for not going to school everyday to inquire on their child's progress. Although Ana is an attentive and loving mother by Georgian standards, as Ana has stated herself, she is not a good mother because she does not give her daughter everything. As noted, throughout history women's roles, and to a greater extent mothers' roles, are five fold: the keepers of religion and nation, peacekeepers, matriarchs, guardians of literacy, and the social and cultural links for the family. In a sense mothers have a socially constructed duty to enable their children to succeed and for some this sense of obligation influences migration decision to the level of leaving their villages, families and their own careers.

Summary

Georgian women have maintained an important, if not crucial, position as the bearers of children, religion, culture, and the nation of Georgia throughout many years of invasions, Soviet occupation, and drastic economic depravation. In other words, as the world changes around them women have remained the cultural backbone, subtly maintaining their families and the Georgian nation. Georgian women continue to portray only the mother and wife image similar to that of St. Nino; they also persevere to support their families through labor migration, multiple jobs, and a heavy double burden, they are also continuing to portray the inspirational image of Queen Tamar as the *dedopali* (queen) and as a result, sustaining their *dedamitsa* (nation). This queen or leadership

position is predominately encompassed within the private sphere, however this sphere is enlarged due to Georgia's extended kinship networks. A matriarch's "rule" can comprise a community, providing the social and cultural connection for her family.

The Soviet era had great influence over women's roles and position in society. Although this regime provided a public and labor emancipation for women, it forced women into a double burden as the productive worker and faithful caregiver. In the difficult years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, women found themselves in the role of peacemaker, as their husbands and sons fought for their country. In the aftermath, women's double burden has continued, if not increased, as jobs dwindled and families struggled. In these trying times, many women have found themselves making the difficult decision to migrate out of their rural homes and into the city to provide more for their families. Today, many are finding that in order to maintain their families they must migrate to Tbilisi, to provide better opportunities for their children in education and careers. These mothers have, as Georgian mothers have in the past, given up their comforts to secure the future well-being of her children. This migration can change women's lives dramatically, from community-centered rural life to individualistic urban society. The following chapter focuses on this shift in spatial-dimension and the difficulties women, as the social and cultural link to the family, face in the attempt to maintain a sense of community akin to their rural homes.

CHAPTER V

SAFETY NETS AND THE URBAN VILLAGE

Introduction

Much of feminist migration research deals with social networks, because the large body of research suggests that migration is not a solitary actor phenomenon. The decision to migrate is made within a family, whether that is a husband and wife or within a much larger context including aunts, uncles, and grandparents. Not only does this phenomenon affect the family itself, but also it affects both the exiting and entering regions. In short, migration affects social networks from the core network members, domestic partners and family, to those on the periphery, neighbors to co-workers. To comprehend fully the experience of the migration process and the experience of the new environment with the challenge of balancing it with the old environment a migrant's social network must be understood. But also, it is important to note that the mobilization of this social support into what is termed as a *safety net* is one of the most important coping strategies employed during times of stress, which could be identified as Georgia's current state, with a suffering economy, lack of formal social support, and a dwindling employment rate.

To that note, it is significant to realize that Georgian cultural and social lives hinge on the family and not just a core nuclear family, but a larger extended family that can include distant cousins, godparents and their families, great-great-grandparents, and

lifelong friends. This priority given to interpersonal relations in Georgian society could

be seen as a kind of collectivism. Within this somewhat amorphous framework, it is

important to identify the social networks that can directly affect Georgians and in

particular Georgian migrants. These migrants have in many ways created a disconnect in

the extended family network, by moving away from the rural village and maintaining a

life outside of the village that in some ways is vastly different, in social and spatial

structure. Through this identification of networks, support, and their place in Georgian

society, a better understanding of the migration process experienced by these women can

be understood.

For the purposes of this research I have developed an appropriate working

definition of a social network as an informal group joined by personal connections

(kinship or friendship), through which social capital is generated; such capital can

provide benefits to seize opportunities, support people through daily life, and buffer

social and economic difficulties (adapted from Putnam 1995, Wellman 1999, Silvey and

Elmhirst 2003). In that definition, social capital is the material and symbolic resources

that an individual obtains through her interactions with her network (Coleman 1988).

Therefore, social capital is composed of two components: the network that enables an

individual to attain resources and the resources themselves (Portes 1998). In the context

of this research, the capability of rural-urban migrants' social networks to mobilize social

capital for emotional support, financial support or instrumental support[13] becomes their

safety nets.[14] Silvey and Elmhirst (2003, 871), state that "social capital in a network can

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[13] Childcare is an example of instrumental support (Ryan 2007).

[14] Silvey (2001) differentiates *household* safety nets, as support provided within the home, from *social* safety nets, as extra-household activities that meet people's basic needs. Due to the amorphous framework of Georgian kinship relations, there is little differentiation in the nature of the safety nets.

provide a safety net in a time of intensified need," which can be during the migration process to assist in finding an apartment, attaining a job, or caring for children.

This chapter investigates the defining issues regarding the necessity and composition of social networks for these nine rural-to- urban migrant women, as well as the support or social capital that is exchanged as narrated by the respondents. Then the chapter will address the issues of the connection and disconnection of the migrants with their rural village and family. In addition, this chapter reviews the cultural importance of these safety nets and their provision to those in need as a mentality in Georgian society.

Necessity and Composition of Networks

As a new migrant or migrant family, it is crucial to have people that can help you gain the "job-house-childcare" combination (Gilbert 2000) or seize opportunities (Wellman 1999), both important steps in migration survival. Due to the nature of their internal, chain migration, friends and relatives who have lived in Tbilisi longer usually help newer migrants find a proper apartment in a safe part of Tbilisi. Rusudan recounts how and why her family aids newly migrated relatives:

> My relatives have recently come to Tbilisi and they don't know how to get somewhere or how to deal with a house. Some simple things… We teach them where is the better place to live with a better price, whatever we can do to help.

She further adds, "My father gave Elene's husband a job in the city, with his auto parts business in the market. So their whole family has moved to Tbilisi." Rusudan and Salome's family are the beginning of the chain for several other families who have migrated to Tbilisi. They have helped them gain employment, shared childcare needs, and found many of them apartments in the area. As Rusudan states, "Yes, we have a lot of relatives here. My close relatives live in a flat close to us. I go visit them a lot. All

the children go to the same school, it's great." For migrants it is important to be near family for all types of assistance, be it a cup of sugar, caring for the children, an emergency, or just someone to talk to.

These women's networks are comprised of individuals who live in close proximity to each other, most of the time in the same district, or even in the same neighborhood or building. This clustered settlement is created by the initial migration and then reproduced by the continued migration of relatives and friends from their rural region. For example, Salome's family has become the hub of a network, they have helped several families, relatives and friends from their region move to Tbilisi, even to the same neighborhood and building. This closeness has created a place-based network in which they are surrounded by others who can support them, as Salome notes, "[We get help from] the same relatives we support, so if we need something they are next to us to help…. Our relatives are next to us and we try to make it better for them." Such clustered settling creates an *urban village*[15], which can provide a respite from the growing urban milieu. An urban village enables a migrant to connect with her neighbors, maintain relationships with other migrants from her village, and create new supportive relationships on a familiar level, in effect reproducing life in the village. Such a concept is similar, albeit on a smaller scale, to Gans' (1962) research of an Italian community brought together in Boston through chain migration and remaining within the community to assist with assimilation into American society, to defend the migrants' culture and to make certain of service directed to their cultural needs. Gans' research has been criticized on the grounds that his West End research was conducted with predominately

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[15] The author's use of this term is to describe the community interactions of rural-to-urban migrants, as being similar to those in the village, yet in an urban context. It does not refer to the rural-urban fringe slums.

first generation migrants who have yet to assimilate into urban culture. However, other researchers (Young and Willmott 1957, Abu-Lughod 1961) have also found similar urban village communities based upon interwoven kinship networks and a high level of individual contact with familiar faces.

The concept of an urban village is similar to an ethnic enclave, a permanent community based on cultural similarities and ethnic colony[16], a community that serves as a port of entry for new migrants to adjust to urban life. However, in the case of Georgian rural migrants because the connections to the urban village are based on kinship ties, they maintain contact with community members whether or not they have dispersed throughout the city. For rural-urban migrant Georgians the maintenance of the urban village is a critical aid in their transition between a horizontally structured rural community and a vertical, urban society.

The Horizontal versus the Vertical Dimensions

Although "rural" and "urban" are problematic categories in current social theory, the conceptualization of each is critical to the formation of networks and subsequently safety nets of Georgian rural-to-urban migrants. Tönnies (1955) gave us the *gemeinschaft-gesellschaft* typology in order to differentiate models of social life typically associated with rural and urban settings. G*emeinschaft,* most associated with rural life, is described as a community built around kinship, attachment to place and cooperative action and *gesellschaft* is associated with urban societies*,* are industrialized populations, where impersonal relationships are founded on formal contract and exchange. Overall,

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[16] Ethnic enclaves are areas dominated by one cultural group. There are other ethnicities in Georgia; however, I would account the clustered settlements to be more so based on regional similarities, for example being from the same village or having family in the area. Ethnic colonies are viewed as more temporary.

Georgian society would be most closely associated with *gemeinschaft*, as such beliefs are held most strongly in the rural regions. However, the urban centers, Tbilisi included, were predominately developed during the Soviet period, where urban planning bordered on ge*sellschaft* typology. This has created a dichotomy in "city life" versus "village life" that continues to this day.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' Academy of Architecture and Works in Moscow conducted the urban planning for all of the Soviet Republics. In Bunkśe's (1979, 383) article *The Role of a Humane Environment in Soviet Urban Planning,* he states that the Soviet urban plan "was to be in line not only with the idea of strong centralized control over socioeconomic development in the country but also with a philosophy that regards the city as an organic unity." There is mention of some regional variation in which local culture was accommodated into the plans, but Bunkśe notes that this was mostly in theory, as everything is subordinated to the interests of the working people.

In Georgia and Tbilisi Sovietization hindered, if not halted the natural process of the historical development, as private property was nationalized and development activities in the form of five-year plans for industrialization and 'welfare of works' were enacted (Bulia and Janjalia 2002). Soviet planners did not buy and sell land in relation to market demands, as is the case in Western cities, but rather allocated land for purposes in accordance with socialist ideology and planning principles. These principles were to restrict urban growth to maintain optimal city size, distribute consumer and cultural goods equally throughout the population, minimize journey to work with emphasis on public transportation, and maintain a strict segregation of land use (Mitchneck and

Hamilton 2003). These were achieved through the basic Soviet city building block, the

microrayon,[17] "which housed 8,000-12,000 people who lived in an area designed as an

integrated unit of apartment buildings, stores, and schools intended to provide the

consumer with cultural and educational services required by Soviet norms" (Mitchneck

and Hamilton 2003, 232). Large tracts and groups of these apartment buildings enclose

many Russian and post-Soviet cities, leaving a largely visible reminder of the Soviet past.

Writing in 1979 Bunkśe (393) describes the space created by the Soviet microrayon:

> The resultant urban landscape is almost invariably a depersonalized,
> characterless sterility with a uniformity of urban style that represents at
> best a minimal response to local conditions of culture and landscape, and
> that rarely includes the attitudes and the perceptions of individuals.

It was in the mid-twentieth century that Tbilisi's urban structure saw its most change, as a

master plan was developed in the 1930s, which set out to build up the area and the

population of Tbilisi. Bulia and Janjalia (2002, 103) describe the growth of the time:

> The capital rapidly absorbed the adjacent areas of Vake, Saburtalo,
> Dighomi, Avtchala, and Navtlugi and began to stretch along the Mtkvari
> River. The Soviet system gave birth to architectural patterns peculiar to
> the political regime – a heavy, pompous so-called Stalin style of
> construction in the years of 1930 to 1950, and the blocks of ubiquitous
> flats built in the 1960s strongly contrasted with the original modest scale.
> New Tbilisi was turned into a typical Soviet city.

Although the socialist ideology behind the planning is defunct, the impression left by the

massive growth of these towering, pompous giants remains ever present. Tbilisi is a

dense and constantly growing city; as more migrants move to the city more apartment

buildings are erected beside those towering Soviet giants.

Conversely, once outside of the capital city, Tbilisi, it is difficult to avoid the rural

views that dominate the Georgian landscape. Such images of homes clustered in valleys

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[17] Also referred to as a microborrough or microdistrict.

surrounding clear streams, narrow dusty roads navigated by the horse and cart, lush green

crops harvested by sturdy men and women, and hearty animals led by ruddy faced

children, conjure up the *rural idyll*.[18] Single-family homes dot the roadsides, some with

more land than others, but all have enough for a garden, chickens and possibly a cow. In

the summer months many families work together to sell fruits, vegetables, and

handicrafts to tourists and travelers. Historically Georgians have worked the land for

personal consumption and some trade. It was not until the Soviet era in which agriculture

was commercialized and somewhat mechanized, that rural structures changed and

became a large portion of their economy. However, with the collapse of the Soviet

Union and subsequent decline in industry and rural infrastructure, many Georgians have

had to leave their garden plots and fields to seek work in Tbilisi.

Beyond the social and economic transitions faced in migration, spatially rural-

urban migrants have moved from multiple bedroom homes, with some amount of land or

yard (Figure 5.1) to a one or two bedroom apartment in a building that can range from

four-, six-, to fifteen-stories high (Figure 5.2) with only a small balcony for private

outdoor space. These horizontal versus vertical layouts create vastly different

communities and thus different ways of interpreting their surroundings. Some of these

migrants look back at their rural lives with an air of longing. They expressed a yearning

for the space, the comfort of the family, and the idea of being surrounded by loved ones

they felt the village gave them, as expressed in these quotes:

> I miss the space, I have a house [in the village] and here I have a flat, so
> this is much more compact here, there it is quite big and you have your
> own room and you can go wherever you like. What I like the most about

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[18] The Rural Idyll "a positive image surrounding many aspects of rural lifestyle, community and
landscape… represent[ing] an ideal society which is orderly, harmonious, healthy, secure peaceful and a
refuge form modernity"(Ilbery 1998, 2).

there is the town itself is that its small and you walk everywhere, wherever you need to go you can walk and it is very nice. And for me [in Tbilisi] I have to commute everyday for work, and it is difficult.

-Makrine

There is a difference in freedom of spirit [in the village], you are free and everybody is around, those who love you are happy to be with you.

-Elene

Most of all I miss family situation, this cozy atmosphere which you get from people you've known since your childhood, not just your family but the whole surrounding society.

-Maia

Figure 5.1: Village home with garden, Vani, western Georgia. (Photo: L. Cahill 2009)

The physical placement of homes on the same horizontal plane, as in rural communities, fosters daily face-to-face interactions that create closeness even with unacquainted people. This horizontal dimension to the rural landscape is more conducive to close interpersonal relations between family, friends, and neighbors that are the

cornerstone of Georgian society. In their article *Women and Rural Idyll*, Little and

Austin (1996, 102) define a common representation of that rural landscape:

> Rural life is associated with an uncomplicated, innocent, more genuine
> society in which traditional values persist and lives are more real. …
> [Also] a place of happiness and solidarity where kinship ties prevail and
> where relationships are unfailingly tight knit. … Pastimes, friendships,
> family relations and even employment are seen as somehow more honest
> and authentic, unencumbered with the false insincere trappings of city life.

On the other hand, the vertical nature of high-rise buildings in urban society separates

one from her neighbors, which can cause her to miss those crucial connections necessary

to create a community. The high-rise apartments keep people isolated and

compartmentalized to live their lives with little interaction, the antithesis of Georgian

society.

Figure 5.2: Soviet apartment blocks in Tbilisi, Saburtalo district. (Photo: R. Erickson 2008)

I sensed an agreement with the interviewees about this growing difference in rural and urban cultures, through a critical cultural marker, food. Once one has moved to the city she can no longer produce her own food, she must rely on others to provide food for her to purchase. The growing disconnect between people in the urban setting has promoted a lack of trust in food quality and freshness. These issues of trust, food, freshness, quality, and the city occurred throughout the interviews, as exemplified by these quotations:

> My family doesn't make cheese at home, but I buy it [in the village] because it's from the region and it's better, more fresh.
>
> > -Keti

> When [my father] comes here, he brings us food that we can't trust to buy here, its fresher [in the village] than here. We grow some foods and vegetables in our garden.
>
> > -Rusudan

> Fresh products, they are never as fresh here. We have different types of meat than you can get here.
>
> > -Salome

> There is a proper butcher down the way. He is from my region so I can get the right cuts of meat.
>
> > -Tamara

Most of the produce in Georgia comes from its own farmlands, which consists of small farms producing a few different kinds of vegetables and fruits. There is some larger scale agriculture, but not to the scale of Western standards of commercial agriculture. This idea that it is "more fresh" when it comes from her own village, does not lie in the issue of cleanliness or quality of the food, rather it lies in the desire to seek out connections to her rural home in the growing urban, anonymous society. Similarly, migrants seek out those shopkeepers and butchers who are from their region in order to maintain a notion of community and recreate this horizontal dimension.

Embedded Within

Since women are the cultural and social leaders of the families, living amongst their relatives allows them to become embedded or bound into this place-based network or urban village, which can greatly aid in their survival as a migrant. In effect, they get much if not all of what they need to survive from their urban village, much as they would in their rural village.

It can be assumed that the closer one's network is the easier it is to get help, but also the stronger the watch can be kept. When both Maia and Ana moved to Tbilisi as young women attending university, their rural families found them homes near other family in order to keep an eye on them, as noted by Maia:

> If there is something broken or needs fixing in the house I will go to my uncle, he lives next door, very close to us.

On the other hand, Ana had a difficult time establishing boundaries for her own independence:

> My dad had a few apartments and one of the apartments was right beside my godmother's apartment, so I was living with them, well I was taking care of myself, but they were there, beside me, so I could ask them for help… but I was a tough one, they would always ask me, 'What are you doing? Where are you going now?' and I hate it when people ask me these kind of questions, especially when you are a teenager. So I had a hard time with them. [My godmother] was saying all the time, 'I am responsible for you….if something happens to you what would I say to your parents'. They had a hard time with me, I know that.

In such a close knit, somewhat collectivized society, everyone keeps an eye on his or her neighbors. Societies positioned on a horizontal level, those that are more collectivist have higher rates of self-monitoring (Goodwin et al. 2001), which in terms of mobilizing needed support can be a strong benefit, but for some it can be suffocating. In Ana's case, she left her village to attend university and achieve independence, but what she found

was just the opposite. After a year in that apartment, she moved out on her own with her husband to the other side of Tbilisi. Coincidentally, in that new apartment, Ana lived next door to a family for months before realizing they were distant relatives. They became very close. Ana needed to reset her own boundaries with the relatives in her network and in that effort she established new relations.

Rural Roots

It is important to note that for these women their social networks are predominantly based on rural relations, as it is family and fellow villagers that move to Tbilisi and seek assistance from each other. With their rural origins they are surrounded by those that care about them and are there for help, in the transition to urban life. They continue to surround themselves with relatives (literally), that support each other in many forms. Maintaining relations with these large extended families builds into dense networks with many people to give, but also to receive support. Additionally, these networks can continue to grow beyond the family with baptisms. To Georgians, godparents and godchildren are considered family, if not more so, because their bond is built under God, as noted by Tamara:

> The first friends we made were our neighbors, then we met Irakli's classmate's parents and we are all still friends. Even though I migrated to this city, I met and have a lot of friends. … I have great friendships with all previous neighbors and some of them are even relatives, because we baptize each other's children. Then become more than a relative, because it is under God.

To a lesser extent, non-relative friends were included as those that gave or receive support; this seemed to be more common among the younger women under thirty. Ana recounts a time when all she had were friends for support:

My friend across the hall had a baby the same age as Lali. We would spend time together, working on chores and watching the children together. … During the really hard times when our husbands were working, I would go to her flat to just cook and heat one flat. They were hard times, but we helped each other because our families weren't there.

As the newer generations diffuse into the urban culture they create new connections with people beyond their family or village ties. For some these become key sources of support, especially for Ana whose family did not follow her into Tbilisi.

Drawing on Support Capital

The type of capital transferred within a social network can shed some light on the social and cultural climate in which migrants reside. In an impoverished country as Georgia is, most people are struggling to get by and may not have much to give as quantifiable or material capital for another's assistance. Nevertheless, what is exchanged is proof that this society strives to survive and assist others in their survival. This quote from Tinatin is a great example of the different kinds of support that can be provided within these social networks:

My aunt helped me a lot [in locating an apartment]… mostly when I need help [I get it] from my husband, my parents, my aunt. I can seek out spiritual assistance and money, or financial assistance, but mostly financially from my parents and my husband. Otherwise if there are other things needed, I look to my relatives.

The women were in agreement in regards to their able to assist with childcare, as they have their own children and it was often a responsibility traded back and fourth. If they are able to, they will give financial support to newly migrated relatives and their relatives who are still in the village, whether it is a couple hundred dollars or just bus fare. Ana is doing well financially in Tbilisi and is still providing significant support to her adult brothers in her rural region, "If [my brothers] need it and ask me, I will send it. Sure if I

have it… I took a loan from the bank and I gave it to [my oldest brother]. And I still am, each time he calls me I give him 100, 200, 300 [Lari]." The predominate feeling is that if a family member is doing well she should assist those that are not as fortunate. Keti explains as a widow she does not have much, but her sister is better off and more likely to help financially: "Mostly my sister [gives money]. She has a family and they are wealthier."

However, if they are unable to assist financially, then without question they will give something else, whether it is a simple gift, fruits and vegetables, or handmade craft, as Keti remarks "I cannot support their family, I do give some presents and some medications for my mother. I don't have that much money, but still I am doing something." Many neighborhoods will get together to donate something, as Salome notes "[it is] our relatives next to us and we try to make it better for them." Also, some women have given employment and work advice, for example Ana paid for her brother to come to the city and learn about the heating company she worked for, so he could return to their region and work for a similar company. Elene will give support any way she can: "Relatives, whoever asks I will help, if I can. Physically, just to help someone, but I don't have that much financially to be able to help in that way. I can assist such as taking care of a child or giving advice."

These women provided support to all who asked for help and yet when they described asking for help, they predominately asked closer family members. This seemed especially poignant with financial issues, as most specifically looked to parents or siblings to borrow from. Keti describes the assistance she received when her daughter was ill, "Some of [my friends] would bring medication, groceries, and my sister gave

money. It didn't even feel like I was out of work because they were helping so much.

My sister's daughter works in a good position, so she has money she can give." Again,

much like Ana's situation, if one has a good job it is established that their support is that

of financial support.

　　　Predominately the women sought out emotional support from friends and family

for a variety of reasons, from daily struggles to family problems. Makrine defines her

assistance and whom she gets it from: "Most often I ask for financial help from my sister,

sometimes my parents …it depends [on the kind of help needed] sometimes it is

concerning money, sometimes it's psychological help, needing care and attention, I will

go to friends." There is a real give and take in social networks; Georgians all know that

life is a struggle and if they have it and can give a little to help someone, they will.

Connections and Disconnections: The Role of Family that Stayed Behind

　　　Gachechiladze (1995) states in his research that internal migrants have serious

difficulties seeking employment and that is why throughout the urban migration process,

they tend to remain connected to their rural kinship networks. This connection to one's

rural family allows the migrant to maintain this horizontal dimension, while gaining

support from relatives in a new setting. But also, for those migrants with family still in

the village, they now must work on balancing their lives between the two worlds, the

rural and the urban.

　　　When asked whether these women would move back to their rural village

permanently, most laughed. They admitted they love their village and they love to visit,

but too much has changed and they could never go back to live permanently. This

question is dependent on the level and type of connection they have with their rural

family. For many of these women, their connection to the rural is family, mainly parents, which they go and visit as often as they are able. However, for some their connection is a requirement, as a relative still needs their care in the rural. This balance can be extremely stressful, because it is much like living two lives and usually one wins out. To illustrate the varied ways that rural families and migrants interact, I have broken this issue down into three vignettes. The first describes those women who given the chance would live in their home village, but because of their careers must resign to just visiting. Second, is the obligation that these women feel as wives and daughters to tend to her village and her relatives, as a tradition and as a duty. The final vignette will address the issue of the growing disconnect between the migrants and their rural relatives, which touches on the importance of locality in preserving social networks.

Her Village Dreams

Sisters Maia and Makrine have strong connections to the rural with not only their immediate family, but also extended family, friends, and neighbors. Their connections to both urban networks and village networks are strong. In their interviews, they indicated that their village networks were the strongest, pulling them towards, as indicated by these quotations:

> If I had a good job there, if I married someone from [my village] and he has a good job there, if I am sure that my children will get the best education there, they will be given opportunities to improve their skills, then I would happily live in [my village].
> -Makrine

> No, I wouldn't mind, if I had proper job and income, it's nicer where you feel free and if you had a nice job and you could have a family there, it's a nice idea, why not? … The problem with me is that I have this fixed idea of how I want things to be, to make my life and sometimes it is not possible, you have to be flexible with life.
> -Maia

Both have a desire to have the best of both worlds, the family and support of the rural and the opportunities and experience of the urban. As Maia states in her quote, "you have to be flexible with life," migrants must be flexible to get the help and support where they can.

A Daughter's Duty

Some of the women still have relatives and husbands that need to be cared for in the village. As society dictates of a proper Georgian woman, they must care for their family. Salome's husband's job is based out of their village, so she tries to return every couple of weeks to check on him and the house, but mostly he comes to Tbilisi to visit. Some women described it as a duty to care for family in the village, as Tinatin describes "I am the only child in the family, so I must care for my parents [in the village]… [I go] once in two or three weeks, because my children study here and they are not able to go there that often. My husband lives and works [in the village], I must go there to help him, wash and clean." Salome's weekly trip back to her village is a critical example of the reversal of support and in a way contrary to Gachechiladze's comment on rural migrants needing their rural contacts; these women are still needed in the rural area. By Salome's expending this time and money to return to the village, exemplifies the preservation of traditions, despite the drastic economic and social changes occurring in Georgia today.

However, maintaining these connections and the traditions can be stressful for the migrant and the family. Rusudan is a very busy university student, who is also taking several language and dance classes outside of the university. She describes how it is difficult for her to appease both lives and how her choice affects her family: "The times

when I am too busy to go there, [my father] gets so angry that I can't go and says 'Why not? It's your house, you have to go there!' and I just say that I am sorry and I feel torn. I miss him and my house, but I can't." Her connection to the rural is strong, as her father lives there and she desperately loves her village, but her life in the city requires much of her time and energy. When life in the city is a place of unending opportunity, those opportunities can make for a busy life.

The Growing Disconnect

Although Georgia is a small country, the distance between the migrant and her rural village can be a difficult issue to overcome and for some those strong ties with those left behind can falter. These women hold multiple jobs to survive and describe how difficult it was to make time in their urban lives to spend time in the rural, as much as they wanted and needed the visit. Even for Maia and her sister with their strong connections to their rural village, Maia describes how she rarely goes home anymore:

> I go to [my village], but to tell you the truth I don't go there that often, I go there very rarely lately, when I was a student I was going every [weekend], nowadays weekends are left for me to take care of the house and plan things for next week, otherwise I am lost. It comes by a whole year and I only go there for the big celebrations or my parents come to visit us or my brother, sister-in-law and children come visit us.

For some the issue is just that their lives have become so different in the city that there is little they can relate to in the rural. When asked how often she contacted those in her village Ana responded quite concisely, "I don't do it. I contact my family, my brothers, my mom… I phone them every day. But I try not to contact too many people over there, because we just don't understand each other anymore, we're different people." This lack of understanding exemplifies the growing disconnect in Ana's urban and rural networks since migrating. By her account she relies more on urban networks

for support. This quote also shows that locality is crucial in maintaining networks; it is easier to keep up ties when someone is a couple blocks away, rather than a couple hours away.

A part of this growing disconnect is that many migrants try to hide their origins to become more urban. They assume a *Tbiliseli,* Tbilisi resident, accent and style as soon as possible. Ana is an excellent example of this adaptation, whether intentional or not. She moved to Tbilisi in 1993 from western Georgia and according to her, "I have lived here long enough that I sound like I am from Tbilisi. This is my city now, nowhere else." Ana believes rural migrants can be picked out of a crowd, "I can tell when people are migrants. You can just see it. They look weird, dress the wrong way and do not speak like they are from Tbilisi." This is exemplified with Maia, a young migrant with strong connections to her rural home, but a deep love for the nature and diversity of the city. This deep love for the city and its diversity of Tbilisi is not enough to become *Tbiliseli* in everyone's eyes:

> *Fieldnotes, October 20, 2007*: Out with Maia today, she was helping me find an apartment. She asked the marshutka[19] driver where the address was in relation to the stop. He mentioned a place that she seemed unfamiliar with, so she asked for clarification. He laughed at her, but explained. Then as we were leaving the marshutka the driver again laughed at us and said something. Later I asked Maia what he said; she told me he asked her if her village knew that she left for the city and were they worried about her! Maia explained that many rural people are mocked in Tbilisi.

Throughout my research and stay in Tbilisi, I found that there is an expectation of being urban, for both the migrants and the established urban residents. Makrine interviewed a young woman for a job at her office, when Makrine asked the woman where she as from, the woman continually replied Tbilisi even after Makrine had commented on her obvious

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[19] *Marshutka*, a Russian word for a minibus. They are a staple of public transportation in Tbilisi.

regional accent. Migrants feel the need to change, to become more cosmopolitan (or

what also could be seen as Western) and for some, shun their village roots. Keti has lived

in Tbilisi since the 1970s and has noticed a change in the population's general attitude,

with the increased urban migration:

> Tbilisi is way worse than it was before, when I first moved here [in 1973].
> A lot of people have come to Tbilisi from the regions. Before people in
> their regions had hospitality and they were very nice, but since they have
> come here, they are very different. They don't know how to live in this
> city and they don't want to be like they were in the village and they are
> somewhere in the middle.

This need to become a *Tbiliseli* can create tension in traditional rural families, for

example Rusudan confided that many of her girlfriends have boyfriends that their parents

do not know about nor would they approve of them. Rural migrants are thrown into a

new set of issues, never dealt with in the village, that families must learn to work

through. This change could also account for the drastic change in landscape between a

horizontal, rural community and a vertical, urban society.

Sheni Ch'irime as Georgian Mentality

During my time in Georgia and throughout my interviews, an unexpected element

arose that helped me to understand the pervasiveness of community support in Georgian

society. It arose as a phrase, *sheni ch'irime*, used in several interviews to explain this

notion of helping people as a Georgian duty or mentality. It is somewhat of a term of

endearment, much like "my darling," but actually translates as "your" (*sheni*) and "plague

or illness" (*ch'irime*). The term is often used in response to someone experiencing

hardship and translates as "give me your suffering" or "may your misfortune come upon

me."

Social support research (Goodwin et al. 2001) in post-Soviet Russia, Georgia, and Hungary, found that Georgian society has the highest levels of perceived social support. Goodwin and others' (2001, 382) statistical and interview analysis found that Georgia's highly allocentric (those who have a more collectivistic tendencies) and egalitarian society reflects a "commitment to promote the welfare of others … [and] a broader sense of social responsibility for those in need across their society." Because of the cultural dimensions behind Georgia's allocentric and egalitarian nature, individuals view the provision of assistance and safety nets as a duty. Tinatin's statement epitomizes this duty, "If anyone needs any help, it is mostly financially or just being there spiritually, I am always glad to help. It is a tough time, more or less, and everybody has their own family, but if anybody needs help, we will always help them, even with money." As she states, "we will always help."

To understand the extent of the ideology behind this phrase, *sheni ch'irime*, I looked to Georgian literature and religion for an origin. In an interview with Georgian linguist, Thea Gagnidze (2008) regarding *sheni ch'irime* and its presence in Georgian culture, she described what is meant when Georgians say *sheni ch'irime*:

> [I]t expresses our implicit attitude toward the rest of the people we know and care for. These two words exemplify everything, which should connect two people, whether they are mother and child, brothers, friends, a person and his homeland, or beloved ones. Simply putting yourself in someone's shoes makes life seem lighter and brighter for yourself and illuminates dark sides of life on earth.

Sheni ch'irime and the ideology behind the phrase has been recorded throughout Georgian history in the words of its most influential poets. Shota Rustaveli's twelfth century poem *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* contains examples of the compassion, devotion, love between people and their united struggle for not only personal happiness,

but for the greater happiness of all people. Gagnidze (2008) notes when reading

Rustaveli's epic poem "it emerges obvious that each character sets their primary goals of

love and devotion as the highest of humanistic ideas, to their friends and homeland. And

with that put their own happiness aside, to aid friends in trouble." For example the

story's character, Princess Tinatin, despite being madly in love with the knight Avtandil,

sends him away to find his friend Tariel, the knight in the panther's skin, and save him

from his unhappiness. Princess Tinatin knows that she will be alone and life will be

difficult without her love Avtandil, but she with great assurance orders him to perform

his heroic deed first. Another example of putting others before one's self, the root of

Tariel's sadness is the imprisonment of his beloved Nest'an-Darejan. However, instead

of asking Tariel to come to rescue her, Nestan-Darejan writes a letter telling him not to

seek her, but first aid her homeland, India, as it is under siege: "წადი ინდოეთის

მიმართე არგე რა ჩემსა მშობელსა მტერთაგან შეიწრებულსა ყოვლგნით ხელ-

ალუპყრობელსა / Go, do battle with the Khatavians, exhibit thyself to me in a goodly

manner, this is better for thee" (Rustaveli 1912, 71). Finally, at the end of the poem, after

Tariel and Avtandil rescue Nestan-Darejan, Tariel, states, "სანამ მე შენ ცოლს არ

შეგრთავ მე ჩემსას არ ვექმარები / If thou be not united to thy wife I will be no

husband to mine" (Rustaveli 1912, 245), as an example of the mutual endeavor for

friends to assist in each other's happiness.

Gagnidze noted that there is an abundance of examples of individuals devotion to

Christianity, country, and king throughout Georgian history. For example, in the 13th

century during Jelal-ad-din's invasion, one-hundred Georgians were slaughtered on the

Metekhi Bridge (or Hundred Martyrs' Bridge) in Old Tbilisi when they would not walk

on the icon of the mother Mary. Another very famous example is within Akaki

Tsereteli's story *Bashi Achuki* (1896) which depicts the difficult times in seventeenth

century life in which the raiding Persian and Ottoman empires threatened Christianity. In

Tsereteli's book the main character, Bashi Achuki, enters into the flooding Aragvi River

to save another man without thought that he might die himself. Afterward, when asked

why he did so, he answered, "ჩემი განსაცდელი რა სახსენებელია, **შენი ჭირიმე**

(*sheni ch'irime*), როცა მთელი საქრისტიანო განსაცდელშია ჩავარდნილი / My

danger can't be mentioned, your sorrow be mine, when the whole Christianity is under

threat" (Tsereteli 2004, 63).

It could be posited that Georgian's duty to help others is rooted in their deep

Orthodox Christian faith. In Orthodox theology, almsgiving, or the charitable giving of

material resources, is an important part of spiritual life. Along with prayer and fasting,

almsgiving is a pillar of the personal spiritual practice of the Orthodox Christian tradition.

The importance of almsgiving and fasting is noted in a lecture given by American

Orthodox theologian, Kerry Patrick San Chirico (2003):

> Seeing things as they are includes coming to terms with the suffering of
> our neighbors. Because if we spend less on our stomachs, if we slow
> down our lifestyles to support a lighter diet, then we have more time to
> spend on helping our neighbor, both with our time and with our financial
> resources. I want to stress that the best way to give is to give of
> ourselves. As Orthodox, we believe in the inherent value of persons. …
> A lot of us don't have much money. But we can give some time, we can
> give of ourselves, our most valuable commodity.

This notion of "coming to terms with the suffering of our neighbors" and to "give of

ourselves" is at the root of what the respondents described as the Georgian mentality

surrounding *sheni ch'irime* and explained it as duty to help those in need, a yearning to

take the hardship away and bare it themselves. Keti was deeply passionate about explaining this mentality:

> I have a neighbor, a blind lady, she has no one and she is very, very poor. She deserves some help from the government but she has nobody to go and fill out the documents, so I went and did the documents for her, to get her some help. Other people were saying that I was doing it to take her money. But I didn't do this for something, I was just helping. It's a Georgian mentality. …Our saying *sheni ch'irime,* 'God give me your pain', you won't find that in many other languages.

Keti believed this to be a deeply ingrained attitude and extremely important to their survival historically and for the future of Georgians. Although she is worried, that this way of thinking was being lost in Tbilisi's urban and Western influences. Ana agreed that Georgians in Tbilisi were changing and felt that this is something Georgians need to instill in their children as they have for centuries: "We need to take care of each other if we want to survive."

Summary

This research has shown that for these women social networks are seen as a way to help each other, as a way to survive the difficult times they continue to live in, and the best way to save Georgian society and culture. Several themes have arisen that exemplify the importance of social networks study in Georgia. First, the importance of extended families in Georgia gives migrants instant support networks that can easily expand. When family is the center of one's social life, it continually reestablishes the mutual support bonds, creating a stronger support network. Second, the locality of these networks should be considered; with the clustered settlement migrants are literally surrounded by relatives, which helps to maintain the urban village and provides quick mobilization of safety nets. The shift in spatial-dimension can make it difficult for

women, as the social and cultural link to the family, to maintain a sense of community akin to their rural homes. Third, their networks are rurally based despite the fact that they are now urban dwellers. This helps them transition into urban life more easily and yet still maintain a village of sorts. Fourth, locality is also important in migrants' relations with those left behind. They can become stronger or completely fall away, but in either instance, these relationships need to be negotiated. Finally, s*heni ch'irime*, this culturally rooted belief in providing help for each other is how Georgians think and more significantly, how they believe they have survived these difficult times.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

A major goal of this thesis has been to understand women's decisions to migrate, their migration experiences and the effects of mobility on Georgian women's socio-spatial position. In addition, this thesis investigates what this migration means for the economic and cultural survival of women in post-Soviet Georgia. Contextualizing women's migration using historical gender roles analysis, this research has shown that Georgian women still maintain a critical role as the social and cultural backbone of Georgia, which has aided them throughout the nation's tumultuous history. This thesis represents an attempt to examine a number of issues pertinent to the lives and livelihoods of those migrating in the effort to create a better future for their families and themselves. This chapter summarizes the findings of the thesis, its theoretical and methodological framework, and the implications of this study for future work.

Summary of Thesis

In order to situate the research completely, this investigation began with Chapter II reviewing the important tenets of feminist geography. I propose that with feminist theories to analyze migrants' experiences in migration I can attain a more contextualized understanding of the processes involved in this phenomenon. I have found that feminist theory builds upon the neo-classical migration theories, to further highlight such concepts as push-pull factors. In addition, by exploring the linkages between gender, place, and place-based identities, I address the question of why women are migrating. A gender-based approach to the migration process, scales, place, and identity provided a structure

for the research where I traced the historic roles of women, their influence on women's choice to migrate, and how these women employ those roles to aid in their survival.

The themes introduced in Chapter II are continued in Chapter III through an analysis of the feminist methodology employed in this research. This narrative on the research process illustrated the importance of qualitative research to capture the nuanced complexities of migration experiences. In-depth interviews, conducted in migrants' homes provided a wealth of information on the home as women's space, family social dynamics, and the mobilization of safety nets. The feminist methodological approach intended to mitigate the power dynamics in research through flexible, critical and reflexive fieldwork processes. This chapter also made a point of addressing the limitations and dilemmas in the research in order to maintain a level of transparency and insight of my position in cross-cultural fieldwork.

To position Georgian women in their social and cultural context Chapter IV provides an historical overview of women's roles throughout history. Chapter IV illustrated that women have maintained an important, if not crucial, role as the bearer of children, religion, culture, and the nation of Georgia through historical figures, art, literature, and societal positions. These critical roles have assisted Georgian families throughout several political, social and cultural transitions from Soviet domination to democratic independence. This chapter also addressed the issue of how women's historical roles have aided women through the changing private and public spheres of Soviet indoctrinated labor emancipation, the struggle with the double burden of work and caretaking, fighting for peace during war, and the fight to hold families together in difficult economic times. Finally, through quotations from interviewed women, this

chapter highlights that just as Georgian women have in the past, these migrants are giving up their comforts to secure the future well-being of her children, an excellent education and a solid career by moving to Tbilisi.

Chapter V addressed the migrants' experiences with migration and the coping strategies they employed to survive in the urban context. Through interviewee quotes and examples, this chapter revealed several themes that exemplify the importance of social networks study in Georgia. First, the importance of extended families in Georgia gives migrants instant support networks that can easily expand. Second, the chapter highlighted the locality of these networks in cloistered settlements, in which migrants are literally surrounded by relatives, which helps to maintain the urban village and provides quick mobilization of safety nets. Third, networks are rurally based despite the fact that they are now urban dwellers. Fourth, interviewees discussed the difficulties, but importance of maintaining relations with those left behind in rural areas. Finally, s*heni ch'irime*, this culturally rooted belief in providing help for each other is how Georgians think and more significantly, how they believe they have survived these difficult times.

Contributions to the Field

My overarching purpose was to understand women's perspective on the importance of kinship bonds and social networks as a coping strategy during their transition from rural to urban. The intersecting themes of gender and gender identity were also central to this analysis, especially in the migrants' motivations for and perceptions of migration, as well as women's specific role in the mobility of the social safety nets. To my knowledge, this type of research has not been conducted in the Republic of Georgia in English. Much of the research occurring in Georgia today is

conducted by governmental agencies (Georgian, U.S. and other European nations) and non-governmental agencies such as various United Nations bodies, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) all for humanitarian and aid purposes. This research is predominately regarding broad trends in the population or the unfortunate status of refugees throughout the country; there is no (English language) research on the lives of internal migrants, or for that matter, women's lives. This thesis has attempted to fill that void, by interviewing migrant women of common means with the average lives of a Georgian, in order to gain their perspective on migration and life in the urban context. The potential to build upon this research is great. With future research, I would benefit from learning Russian or Georgian fluently, in order to interact directly with the interviewees, rather than through an interpreter. It would be interesting to conduct interviews with other relatives and friends involved in the migration chain or interview the children that are at the heart of this migration process. Both would give a wider range of information about the topic of Georgian kinship networks and safety nets.

Through feminist geographic framework, several themes have come to fruition that have not been presented in geographic research in Georgia. The themes are as follows: the influence of historical gender roles on women today, the extent to which place and place-based identity affects women's public and private lives, and the importance and pervasiveness of social networks and safety nets in Georgia society. All are unique to Georgian society and culture and all significant to the larger tenets of feminist geography. Methodologically, this thesis research upholds feminist geography's

espousal of understanding the phenomenon of migration through the individual voice or perspective on the experience of migration.

This is not to say that this research was easy or without flaw, because it was not. There are several important lessons I learned as a feminist geographer drawing on qualitative research methods. As a feminist geographer, it is critical to understand that the power structure within research is difficult to break, but it is important to have mitigation techniques. Not only did these mitigation techniques assist in the power struggle, but they afforded me some amazing research insights. For example, allowing the interviewee to choose the interview location made them feel more comfortable, but provided me with that much more data in seeing their home and family dynamics. More importantly, because I was a guest in their home, they wanted to teach me and show me more about their lives and culture. Conducting feminist research has shown me the importance of being flexible in the field, as well as how to negotiate my identity while working in the field. Although this flexibility and negotiation can expose dilemmas in the work, it is critical to identify the problems. Recognizing these limitations and dilemmas in my research has forced me to look at my research from a different perspective and in the future challenges me to continually conduct quality research. Needless to say, in theory and method, this research maintains the contextual and experiential perception of geographical inquiry that blossoms in feminist research and could benefit the larger discipline of geography.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Preliminary Interview

1. Breaking the ice: Can you tell me about your family's home village?

2. Can you explain the importance of a person's or family's home village or region?
> **Probe:** How do you feel about your family's home region?

3. How do you think home village or "region of origin" influences how people might look to for support or help in their daily lives?
> **Probe:** Have you looked for help from village members? Can you describe how and what kind of support
> **Probe:** Are you more likely to get help from some who is also from you home region or village?

4. What makes your home region different from or the same as where you lived in Tbilisi?
> **Probe:** Do people from the same region live near each other in the city?

5. How important are you or other female family members in the networks created by these region ties?
> **Probe:** What roles do you or these other female family members play in these regional relationships?

6. How does this connection to one's home benefit or constrain you in your life in the city or abroad?
> **Probe:** Is your experience the same as others?

7. How do you feel about people from the different regions in Georgia?
> Probe: Do you have friends or family from these regions?
> Probe: Have you ever asked them for support?

8. Is there anything else that you feel important to address?

Appendix B
Original Interview

1. Breaking the ice: Can you tell me about your family's province of origin?

2. Can you explain the importance of a person's or family's home village or province?
   Probe: How do you feel about your family's home region?

3. How do you think province of origin influences to whom people might look for support or help in their daily lives?
   Probe: Have you looked for help from village members? Can you describe how and what kind of support
   Probe: Are you more likely to get help from some who is also from you home region or village?

4. What makes your _____ (province of origin) different from or the same as where you lived in Tbilisi?
   Probe: Do people from the same region live near each other in the city?

5. How important are you or other female family members in the networks created by these regional ties?
   Probe: What roles do you or these other female family members play in these regional relationships?

6. How does this connection to one's home benefit or constrain you in your life in Tbilisi or abroad?
   Probe: Is your experience the same as others?

7. How do you feel about people from the different regions in Georgia?
   Probe: Do you have friends or family from these regions?
   Probe: Have you ever asked them for support?

8. Is there anything else that you feel is important to add?

Appendix C
Addendum Interview

1. Breaking the ice: Tell me about where you are from.

2. Breaking the ice: Tell me about where you live now.

3. In general is life better or worse for your family now that you have moved to Tbilisi?

4. What motivated or influenced your move to Tbilisi?
    Probe: Child's education? Your employment? Spouse's employment? Family?
    Probe: Which factor(s) are most important and why?

5. How connected are you to friends and family from _____ in Tbilisi?

6. What has helped you most in this transition?

7. If you need help who do you look to?
    Probes?

8. Do you help others? If so how and who you help?

9. How close are you to friends and family at _____?
    Probe: How do you maintain contact?
    Probe: How often?

10. Do you return to _____ (province of origin/village)?
    Probe: Under what circumstances? Religious holidays, wedding, birth, festival, harvest
    Probe: How often do you return?

11. What do you miss about _____ (province of origin/village)?

12. Do you see yourself moving back to _____ (province of origin/village)?
    Why or Why not?

13. Is there anything else you would like to add before we finish?

Appendix D
Participant Biographies

Ana, 31-year old married woman with one twelve-year old daughter, Lali. Ana moved to Tbilisi in 1993 to attend the university, living near other family for a little while, then striking out on her own in the city. She has a history degree from Tbilisi State University. She lived and worked in Canada for six years with her husband and brother. Her husband, Dato, makes a good living managing a construction company in Canada, so they wanted to bring Lali over. Ana returned to Tbilisi four years ago to be with Lali and wait for the visa process to go through. She recently began working with a close family friend in his automotive import business. She soon proved to be indispensable in the business and was made co-owner.

Maia, 29-year old single woman currently teaching English to students at a Tbilisi-based university, as well as holding the position of executive administrative assistant for the university. She is educated in Arabic studies and continued on to gain her doctorate in Arabic linguistics. Several years ago she lived, worked, and studied Arabic language in the Netherlands for two years. She is very religious, traditional, and family oriented. She is torn between her career, which would prosper outside of Georgia and her love for her country, culture, and family, which she feels requires her to stay in Georgia. She lives with her sister, Makrine, in a flat her family owns in Tbilisi.

Makrine, sister of Maia, 23-years old, single, and currently teaching English for a Western language institute and working for a bank. She is the quintessential young Georgian woman, well educated, career motivated, and fashionable! She loves the city, but truly desires a simple life with family. If she could have the career she has now in the village, she would quickly return. She is very close with her sister, Maia, and their mother.

Keti, 51-year-old widow and mother of a daughter in her late-twenties. Keti moved to Tbilisi to attend the university in the 1970s. She obtained a degree and speaks fluent German, Russian, and some English. She married into a very wealthy Georgian family,

but her husband passed away several years ago, along with his family. Currently, she lives with her daughter, who is a student and works part-time at the airport. Keti is a nanny and German tutor for Lali, Ana's daughter. She is unable to afford visiting her village often, but her brother and his children come to Tbilisi often.

Tamara, forty-year-old married woman with one son. She had an accounting job in the large factory in her village until they decided to move for her son Irakli's education. Upon moving to Tbilisi, she became the homemaker and cared for her son throughout his school years. She stated many times, that everything she did she did for her son. Irakli recently finished his broadcasting degree at university and received a prestigious position as an anchor on one of Georgia's televisions stations. He is the pride of the family.

Rusudan, eighteen-year-old university student, studying Japanese language and culture, English, and Italian. She and her family moved to Tbilisi in 2006, mainly to assist her while she attends the university. Rusudan is an extremely motivated young woman with her studies and career aspirations; she hopes to work in the field of diplomacy. She is very religious and centers her life on her family. She continues to cherish Georgian traditions in many ways, one being through traditional dance. Nevertheless, she is also ready to travel the world; like many young Georgians, she is torn between tradition and urbanity.

Salome, fifty-year-old mother of Rusudan, as well as a twelve-year-old daughter and a six-year-old son. She was working as a gynecologist, but has since quit her job to move to Tbilisi and care for her children. She and her husband are apart most of the time because of his job in the village and their need to provide a higher level of education for their children, which they feel is in Tbilisi. She cares deeply for her children and has admittedly sacrificed her career for their benefit.

Elene, distant cousin of Rusudan, thirty-year-old married woman, moved to Tbilisi in 2001 when her husband got a job working for Salome's husband. She moved to care for him and also feels as though her two children will get a better education in the city. They

lived in the flat that Salome and Rusudan now live in. She is truly a convert to the city life, so does return to her village to care for her parents and in-laws, but could never move back to the village.

Tinatin, Salome's niece, forty-year-old married with three children, just moved to Tbilisi in September of 2007. Her oldest daughter is in the tenth form and will graduate from her secondary education soon. Tinatin wanted to prepare her for state exams and help her to continue on to the university. She was able to purchase her flat near by Salome's neighborhood. Her husband works in the village, so she returns weekly to care for him, as well as their parents.