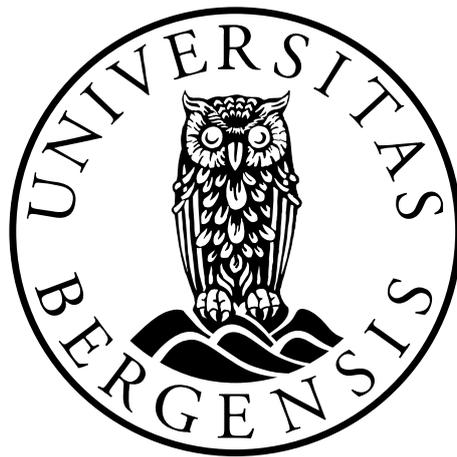


Fatherhood in an Intergenerational Perspective

The case of Georgia

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Abstract

The study explores Georgian fathers' perceptions on fatherhood and identifies their everyday fathering practices. Considering that fatherhood is a fluid concept, the research explores what a "good father" is according to two generations of fathers, young and old. Similarities and differences between these generations are analyzed in the thesis. The study also explores youth's and mothers' opinions on fatherhood. Empirical findings were generated using solely qualitative research methods. Data was collected by the method of in-depth interviews with fathers, 16 in total. Eight of the fathers belonged to the young generation, and the rest were elder fathers. For the purpose of obtaining youth's viewpoints, two focus group discussions were held. In addition, eight short interviews were conducted with mothers. The empirical findings were analyzed by using different conceptual frameworks: West and Zimmerman's concept of "doing gender" "social cognitive theory on gender identity development" as developed by K. Bussey, and R. Connell's "theory of masculinity".

The research concludes that strong patriarchal norms and gender stereotypes prevail in Georgian society, and are expressed in similar ways by both generations of fathers as well as by mothers and the youth. Breadwinning is assumed to be the primary duty of a good father, while women continue to cope with caregiver and employee roles. According to the study, gender perceptions are similar in both generations of fathers. The research, however, also points that masculine behavior is less prevalent in old generation of fathers. The study argues that due to existing hegemonic masculine values, fathers are not yet ready to include caregiving duties in their lives. However, the study observes youth's and mothers' urge for emotionally involved fathers; fathers who will spend more time with their children and establish warmer relationships. Considering the major findings, the research suggests that existing gender stereotypes should be challenged by raising awareness among different parts of the community. Parallel to this, revision of family policies and parental leaves are strongly recommended.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In modern society, the meaning of fatherhood is in a process of change. In many parts of the world where traditions and patriarchal norms are valued, it is more likely to find traditional – breadwinner model of fatherhood (Waller & McLanahan, 1999). According to this model of fatherhood, fathers are expected to work outside the families while mothers care for the household and children. However, with the increase of women’s employment, rise of feminism, and increase of single parent households - the traditional breadwinner model of fatherhood has been questioned, creating ambiguity about the meaning of good fatherhood (ibid, p.2). During the last few decades, social scientists’ interest towards fatherhood have been increased, and the literature on relationships between fathers and their children became diverse. Contemporary social science has recognized the social construction of fatherhood, claiming that images of a good father are formed, to a great extent, by the heterogeneous circumstances in which men find themselves. In other words, the concept of fatherhood is never static but changes according to the given socio-cultural structure across the time.

Lamb (2010), mainly focusing on the American context described the history of fatherhood and coined four different models of it: *moral teacher*, *breadwinner*, *gender role model*, and *nurturing father*. The emergence of a new models, however, doesn’t indicate complete elimination of the old ones; rather it points out the dominance of one or the other form of fatherhood across the time.

Moral teacher. In the late seventeenth and eighteenth century, children were considered as innately sinful and “unrestrained”. Thus, it was a father’s responsibility to ensure a child’s proper development with the right moral and religious education. While women, who were considered less rational and more predisposed by emotions, handled care related tasks. By that time, fathers were considered not only as a primary parent who possessed higher authority over childrearing decisions compared to mothers, but also received custody of children in case of a divorce (Demos 1986; Furstenberg 1988 in Waller & McLanahan, 1999, p. 3).

Breadwinner. After industrialization, fathers' role as moral guides and teachers gradually shifted to the breadwinner role. New beliefs about paternal involvement developed, and duties among parents were redivided. Mothers were deemed as primary parents, while fathers' authority over childrearing gradually diminished. Moreover, in the case of divorce, mothers were increasingly awarded the custody of children. In the same period, perceptions of essential differences between men and women began to rise. Women's biology was considered crucial for nurturing children, while men were deemed suitable to participate in the labor market. As quoted by Demos "At this time, men's status as breadwinners was the justification for deference in the home" (Demos 1986 in Waller & McLanahan, 1999, p. 4).

Gender role model. After the World War II the discourse of fathers as sex-role models appeared. According to this model, fathers' primary role was to develop their son into a "proper masculine man". Psychologists argued that fathers played an essential part in forming children's sexual identities, in particular for the sons. Furthermore, the absence of father was in some cases associated with homosexuality (Pleck 1987, p. 90-92). However, later studies claimed that there is no permanent correlation between father's and sons' masculine identities, which posed the role of fathers as sex-models under question. According to contemporary researchers, the quality of relationship and amount of time spent together is more important than the masculinity of the father itself (Lamb 2004). In addition, it should be noted that in the same period breadwinner model of fatherhood was still widely practiced

Nurturing father. This model of fatherhood has emerged in the Western societies over the last three decades. It stresses the fathers' emotional involvement in child upbringing and at the same time sharing the child care tasks with mothers (Griswold 1993 in Waller & McLanahan, 1999). Pleck (1987, p.93) explains: "This new father differs from older images of involved fatherhood in several key respects: he is present at the birth; he is involved with children as infants, not just when they are older; he participates in the actual day-to-day work of child care, and not just play; he is involved with his daughters as much as his sons." This model of "new" or "involved" fatherhood was a move away from the breadwinner model, which kept away fathers from nurturing their children.

These models above illustrate how fatherhood changes over time and how new ideals of the "good father" emerge. However, change is not necessarily spread equally across the world. These ideals of good fathers are spread differently dependent on the cultural context. Obviously, fatherhood practices in the Western countries are different from the majority of the

world. Considering the fact, that models of fatherhood change with the time, a difference in ideas about fatherhood are also expected across generations. Therefore, my goal in this research is to find out, which fatherhood model prevails in the current Georgian context. What does it mean to be a good father from the perspective of fathers? And how do these ideas change across generations?

1.2 The Georgian Context

After gaining independence from Soviet Russia in 1991, Georgia experienced broad economic and political transformations. Even though during the Soviet period Georgian women were given equal rights to work and participate in every aspect of social life their primary obligation was taking care of their families. However, the situation for women turned out to become more vulnerable after the collapse of the Soviet regime. The economic difficulties that followed the collapse impacted men and women differently. It appeared harder for men to cope with poverty, as they were used to higher living standards during their youth. However, women happened to be more flexible and in many cases they found employments in the informal economic sector (Nadaraia 2013). National statistics illustrates increased employment rates for women during the last fifteen years, and in 2012 the percentage of employed women in all over the country was 49% and 66 % for men (National Statistics Office of Georgia). However, despite the fact that women started to contribute to families' economy more actively than before, men still refused to participate in domestic work and child care (Nadaraia 2013). According to persistent gender stereotypes in Georgia, men should have the higher authority in the decision making process regardless of the economic power, while women remain responsible for the child care and domestic labor. This creates a double workload for women, struggling to balance family and work life while prioritizing the former one (Kachkachishvili, 2014). And indeed, studies and statistics demonstrate that the country is yet ruled by the patriarchal norms. In Georgian society, women, despite their employment status are in charge of the household labor and child raising, while men's contributions to their families are limited to breadwinning (Japaridze, 2012).

After 1994, Georgia took steps towards democratization and gender equality by implementing number of laws and conventions to combat discrimination against women and increase

women's employment in public and political sectors (ibid). Alongside with the legal implementations, local and international NGO-s carried out various projects focusing on raising awareness of women's rights and gender issues through educational activities. Although the reduced statistics on domestic violence and women's increased employment rate demonstrate the positive effects of the implemented reforms, gender equality remains as the far reaching goal for the country. According to the Global Gender Gap Index of 2011, Georgia occupies the 86th place among 135 countries (Bendeliani, 2012); and even though studies on gender beliefs and men's participation in household started to emerge, researches focusing particularly on fatherhood are yet to be seen.

1.3 Problem Statement

According to the UNDP research report on "Public perceptions study on gender equality in politics and business" (2013), the concept of the family carries significant value in the Georgian society. It is the place where traditions, national values and identities are kept and respected by practicing those Georgian traditions. There are recognized ideals and stereotypes about what a Georgian family should look like and how members of such family should behave. Patriarchal beliefs are a strong attribution of Georgian families, where the hierarchy between men and women is quite evident. It is documented in the above mentioned research that 88% percent of the population regard breadwinning as a male's attribution and only 1% thinks that women should undertake this task (UNDP report, 2013); this of course reconfirms the masculine dominance in Georgian families. Interestingly, it appears that there is no significant difference between the rural and urban area in terms of men's role in the family. According to the UNDP report (2013), 86 % of the urban and 90% of the rural population agrees that breadwinning is men's primary duty.

In the Georgian context, women's self-realization is seen to be completed in terms of housewife and mother roles. It is the opinion of the majority (92%) that women should be occupied with the child upbringing and taking care of the house, rather than with their career (ibid, p.19); this indicates that men don't feel obliged to participate in the child care since it is seen as the responsibility of the mother. In many cases, women are the ones who consider men doing housework as less appealing (ibid, p.16). Hence, men's low involvement in child care and household labor is not an unexpected result.

According to Georgian values, a family is only complete with the presence of a child. However, the concept of family in Georgia often involves parents as well, who help their children and grandchildren while living with them (ibid, p.25). In addition to this, preference towards having a son has been demonstrated by various studies. In Georgia, a son is more favorable for parents as he can provide the financial support for them when they get old (ibid, p. 27).

As mentioned before, men are not likely to participate in household and child care due to persistent gender perceptions. The ways in which men are involved in child care are mainly connected with the social world (ibid, p.13,14). For example, taking a child to sleep, feeding, giving the bath, and caring for them while they are sick are all seen as mother's duties. Fathers, however, are responsible for taking children to the doctor or discussing serious issues with them (ibid). Most importantly, UNDP study report (2013) illustrates that the majority of women (51%) are satisfied with the existing child care and household labor division in the family.

In this thesis I am going to use and refer to the term "fatherhood" as a parental state, which might include biological parenting or social parenting. Therefore, I will refer to the "father" as the one who has either a biological child, adopted child or a stepchild. The study will explore the existing model of fatherhood in the Georgian context. The research particularly focuses on fathers' perceptions and their beliefs of the "good father" across two generations of fathers. It will reveal ongoing social changes and highlight stagnations. The qualitative nature of the study enables me to display fathers' reasons for their passive involvement in child care and household labor. The study also examines the correlation between masculinity and fatherhood and how fathering practices are influenced by their gender identity. In addition to this, the thesis displays young people's and mothers' views about fatherhood and gender roles in general linked to the fathers.

1.4 Research Objective

The main goal of my research is: *to explore changing perceptions of fatherhood in the Georgian society*. In addition to the main objective, the study will explore the following specific research questions:

Research questions

1. Explore men's perceptions of fatherhood and their actual practices as fathers;
2. Examine generational changes in the understanding of fatherhood;
3. Explore mothers' and young people's perceptions of a "good father";
4. Explore dynamics between ideas of masculinity and ideas about fatherhood.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. In the first chapter, the background information, Georgian context, and problem statements are presented. The second chapter discusses relevant literature and highlights the gaps that the study intends to fill. Chapter three provides a theoretical framework for the research. Three relevant theories: *doing gender*, *the theory of masculinity*, and *social cognitive theory of gender identity development* will assist me to explain empirical findings. The fourth chapter is connected with the research methodology; it reveals the data collection processes. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present empirical findings. Chapter five discusses fatherhood perceptions and practices across the two generations of fathers. Chapter six elaborates on ideas about masculinity and femininity in parenting. Chapter seven explores fatherhood from the standpoint of young people and mothers. Chapter eight provides the conclusion of the thesis, relevant recommendations and suggests ideas for further researches.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

“Very few family researchers have turned their thinking and studies to the most simple and yet most profound questions of what it means to be a father and husband in a given society ... We still have little knowledge of how most men perceive fatherhood” (Lewis and Salt 1986, 16-17)

A variety of literature illustrates that during the last few decades various dimensions of fatherhood have been discovered. Accumulated knowledge suggests that the realm of fatherhood is much wider than has been thought before and is in need of diverse approaches (Lamb, 1987). There are studies which focus on father’s involvement in child development and children’s psycho-social consequences in case of absent dads. Some other studies examine fatherhood in a gender perspective and discuss gendered understandings of fatherhood. Literature on the correlations between masculinity and fatherhood can also be found, although they appear to be limited. New fatherhood has also emerged as an essential part of the discussions in social science. With the appearance of involved fathers, researchers draw attention towards fathers’ coping strategies to balance between public and private lives. A few studies are found which refer to fathers’ approaches towards their fathering roles, priorities, and moral values. All these above mentioned areas of research have been conducted in different cultural contexts, covering various geographical regions. Some of the issues have been explored more thoroughly than others. However taking into account complexity and changing nature of the fatherhood, more research is required in order to get a better insight into the given phenomena.

Unfortunately, the literature available about fatherhood practices in the Georgian context is very limited. According to the "Assessment of Work and Working Structure of Non-Governmental Women’s Institutions in Georgia’ (Zghenty 2013 in Japaridze et al. 2013), during the last 5 years researches mainly focused on domestic violence, women’s legal and social rights, women’s participation in social and political life, women’s employment and professional development, and gender stereotypes. Although later studies demonstrate increased interest towards men’s participation in family life, those studies hardly discuss

fatherhood and fathering practices. Hence, fatherhood appears to be unexplored within the Georgian context, especially from the fathers' perspective. Considering this, I have a good opportunity to enrich the limited knowledge on fatherhood and discuss Georgian fathers' practices from their standpoint.

Since Georgia is located on the European continent, in this chapter, I will mainly focus on the studies representing the European context. Apart from this, I will introduce the relevant literature connected to fatherhood in general. I will focus on four different aspects of fatherhood. Firstly, I will discuss studies which look at fatherhood through a gender lens, and will give an overview of different types of fathering practices. In this part, I will also present fathers' personal attitudes as discussed in various studies. Secondly, I will present researches of fatherhood in relation to masculinity. After that, I will have discussions regarding studies of men's strategies of coping with public and family lives and challenges met while doing so. Thirdly, I will discuss the concept of "New fatherhood" through looking at relevant studies. In this domain, as the last part, I will present studies conducted in the Georgian context. In the end, I will explain how my research will be valuable for my national environment as well as for the wider field of fatherhood studies.

2.1 Understanding Fatherhood from Different Perspectives

Construction of fatherhood and family through a gender lens. The meaning of gender not only characterizes the differences between men and women, but establishes their roles, models of behavior, thinking, rights, duties, and obligations (Scott, 1986). As Ridgeway and Correll (2004) formulate it, gender operates as a "background" in every social role we perform. And since paternity is deemed as one of the major social roles, gender is a significant factor influencing paternal behavior. Due to the culturally created gender expectations and perceptions of parental involvement, many parents experience apprehension and struggle while trying to meet their gendered responsibilities (Marsiglio & Pleck, 2005). Socially constructed gendered expectations influence how men are seen and treated as fathers, as well as how fathers themselves perceive their paternal roles and duties (Marsiglio, 1998).

While discussing fatherhood from a gender perspective, the concept of "essentialism" emerges (Marsiglio & Pleck, 2005), indicating common misconceptions about fathers' unique characteristics, which differentiate their parenting styles from those of mothers and their

contributions to children's development. Silverstein and Auerbach (1999 in *ibid*) classified three common viewpoints in an essentialist approach to fatherhood: 1) "gender differences in parenting are universal and biological 2) fathers' uniquely masculine form of parenting significantly improves developmental outcomes for children, especially for sons; and (3) the context in which fathers are most likely to provide for and nurture young children is heterosexual marriage" (*ibid*, p. 6). According to essentialist ideas about fatherhood, fathers can affect child's development in a specific and irreplaceable way (*ibid*).

According to Naomi Rosh White (1994) men are always in a privileged position in the paid labor and such dominance in the labor force diminishes their involvement in the domestic life. In line with this, Hewlett (1992 in Marsiglio & Pleck 2005), while recognizing cultural differences of the fatherhood construction, at the same time highlights that fathering practices are very similar across the world. He argues that fathers are generally less involved in child care and domestic life compared to mothers. And moreover, they are also more often expected to provide financial stability for their families (*ibid*).

Bianchi et al. (2000 in Japaridze et al. 2014) discusses the gender division of household labor within three theoretical frameworks: (1) the time availability approach; (2) the relative resources approach; (3) gender role attitudes approach. The time availability approach compares women's employment time and their domestic labor time with the men's housework time. The relative resources approach assumes that a smaller difference between the spouses' incomes can lead to more equal household labor division. Likewise, it suggests, that the person with higher financial power will be relatively less involved in the domestic work. According to gender role attitudes approach, person with more unrestricted gender role attitudes generally demonstrates higher involvement in household labor, compared to those, with the more conservative gender role views. However, feminist scholars argue that gender division of labor is not solely an outcome of a rational arrangement. Various studies on the examples of low or middle-income countries demonstrate that higher income and financial stability doesn't always lead to women's decision making power, or to their exemption from the household labor. Moreover, employment status of women often means double workload for them, as they struggle to combine domestic work with their paid employment. This phenomenon is often called employed wife's "second shift" (Hochschild, 1989 in Marsiglio & Pleck 2005). Double burden of women is not uncommon in the post-Soviet countries. Due to the economic reasons, the families are less likely to cope with financial difficulties if wives would cut their employment. For example, Haldis Haukanes (2001) describes the double burden of Czech

women, who were trying to combine family duties with their employment. She points out that Czech women's employment was the necessary financial contribution for their families. However, she also highlights that the primary reason for employment is not only the financial gain. For many Czech women, occupation appeared to be an important part of their lives and they opted for having careers, even though they experienced scarcity of free time and energy while doing so (Haukanes 2001). Georgia as the post Soviet country is not an exception. As already mentioned in the introduction, during the Soviet period Georgian women were given equal rights for work, however their employment rate was still much lower compared to men's. After the collapse of the Soviet regime, followed economic harshness made it necessary for women to become self-employed in the informal economic sector; however, they were still responsible for child care and domestic tasks as men didn't seem to contribute to family tasks (Nadaraia 2013). Thus, women's certain financial independence hardly revised traditional gender roles and didn't necessarily cause an increase of men's participation in family life.

Different types of fathering practices. As indicated in the introduction, the ways in which fathers can be involved in raising children can change over time and vary across cultures. However, Lamb (1987 in Marsiglio, Day & Lamb 2000) suggests three general characterizations of the paternal involvement, *economic support*, *emotional support of mothers*, and *direct interaction with children*. For the activities, involving direct relationships between father and children, Lamb defined three types of involvement, *engagement*, *accessibility*, and *responsibility* (ibid). Engagement implies father's direct interaction with children, such as, playing, feeding, reading books, giving bath, etc. As for the accessibility, it involves supervision (being in the same room while child plays, but not necessarily interacting with him/her). Responsibility refers to the parent's duty to take care of child's wellbeing and make general arrangements (e.g., taking the child to the doctor, taking him/her to school, etc.).

It seems obvious that fathers can provide care and interact with children in many different ways. Although many researchers have highlighted fathers' limited involvement in child care activities due to their breadwinner roles, increased amount of involved time doesn't necessarily indicate the depth of fathers' engagement in child raising. Marsiglio, Day & Lamb (2000) emphasize that some fathers may spend relatively less time interacting with their children, but they may be highly involved in making decisions in their children's lives. On the other hand, some fathers may spend a lot of time doing things for their children, but display less motivation and desire of doing so. Thus, the relationship between time investment and depth of engagement also depends on the prevailing models of fatherhood in the existing society and

can vary among individuals as well. In addition to this, Marsiglio et.al (ibid:280) distinguishes between *direct* and *indirect* paternal influences. For example in the case of direct influence, a father may have a positive effect on child's development by teaching him/her certain skills. However, in case of indirect influence, a father may work overtime that allows him to afford a specific teacher for teaching his son certain skills. In case of following a breadwinner model, fathers usually contribute to child's development indirectly.

These above mentioned ways of paternal involvement, once again prove how complex the nature of fatherhood is. Practices and behavioral patterns not only differ by the country context, but include many forms within themselves.

Fathers' perspectives and attitudes. There are limited studies available on father's subjective perspectives on fatherhood. However, the research conducted in Australia by Naomi Rosh White (1994) looks deeply into fathers' personal experiences and determines fatherhood from the father's personal standpoint. Her study is of particular relevance to my research as it displays similar aspects of fatherhood as those are emerging in my research. Hence, I will have an in-depth discussion on her work and show its relevance to my research.

White's study examines eleven men's understandings of what it means to be a father and their definition of fatherhood. She highlights three main aspects of fathering practices: *fathers' importance of their breadwinner roles* and struggles while doing so, *gender-differentiated approach towards children*, and *fathers' personal experiences with their own parents*.

According to White (1994), most men are still minimally involved in the care and rearing of their children. Fathers' direct involvement in child care activities tends to last for a very short period. The majority of men still view their fundamental duty to be breadwinning and providing for their families (ABS, 1987, 1993; Pease and Wilson, 1991, 54; Segal, 1990 in White 1994). White (1994) highlights that the importance of being the provider, of giving one's children "the right chance in life" had high significance in the majority of her interviewees. White (1994) quoting Jessie Bernard, states that: "[A man] might have lots of other qualities, good or bad, but if he is a Good Provider, everything else is either gravy or the price you have to pay" (Bernard, 1983, p.149 in White 1994, p. 121). However, it is worth mentioning that by the time White's study was conducted, the concept of "new fatherhood" was still to be coined. And yet, considering the nature of the study and its results, it carries considerable relevance for to research.

White (1994) states that the men she interviewed displayed a number of characteristics of a good father. Being loved and having a sense of purpose and satisfaction appeared to be one of the important aspects of parenting. She also notes that some of the participants, who themselves experienced abandonment by fathers, stressed the importance of always 'being there' for their children. The majority of men indicated the responsibilities which are usually associated with the fathering practices: supporting family financially; disciplining children; providing mental and emotional support for their children; teaching them to contribute to the community and social realm.

According to the White's and other studies quoted by her, fathers expressed different responsibilities for sons and daughters, where sons were given a greater significance. The daughter's upbringing was seen to be more in the mother's realm, while the son was the domain of the father. Nydegger and Mittenes (1991 in White 1994) highlights that fathers' gender preference towards their children is not necessarily dependent on child's age. According to their findings, fathers still felt increased responsibility to ensure their sons' financial stability even after child becomes grown up. While daughters were viewed as more gentle individuals in need of protection. The fathers interviewed by Nydegger and Mittenes felt that "they shared a world with their sons, while girls were seen as 'the other'" (ibid p, 123).

It is also worth mentioning that according to White's (1994) empirical findings, interviewees stressed that their own fathers were minimally involved in their lives, while being too busy with breadwinning. White notes that participants rarely highlighted thankfulness to their own fathers for bringing money at home. Additionally, she mentions that participants highlighted close relationships with mothers, who were always by their sides and provided support for them.

Lastly, White (1994) emphasizes men's stress while dealing with the breadwinning roles. According to her, men are seen and judged by their financial status. She states that men have become, as Jessie Bernard puts it, 'success objects' (Bernard, 1983, 150 in ibid, p.129). White (1994) suggests that given patterns are the indicators of the significance of hegemonic masculinity in the expression of fathering practices.

Another study, which represents fathers' understanding of fatherhood, is the research done by Rebecca Kay (2006) in post-Soviet Russia. Her study was mainly of a qualitative nature using observation and interviews as the basic methods. Kay (2006) describes the notion of fatherhood in post-Soviet Russia and explores men's experiences of being a father. Kay (2006) indicates

that in the post-Soviet period, men see father's role within the family as protecting, transmitting skills, providing discipline and most of all providing family with economic support. The fathers rarely participate in everyday child caretaking activities, such as feeding the child, changing diapers, reading a book for them, taking them for a walk or just playing. These things were seen as mother's duties and, therefore, deemed as "not masculine". Moreover, as the research shows, for some fathers, daughter and son are different things. As said by one of the Kay's participants "You can love your daughter, but a son has to become independent" (Kay, Rebecca 2006: 134). A father's role was, therefore, to prepare boys to face the demands of public life (ibid: 134).

However, when exploring men's attitudes and how they expressed themselves as fathers, Kay describes that men portrayed their children as a "source of a joy" but at the same time they felt a huge responsibility (Kay 2006:130). After the breakdown of the Soviet regime, these responsibilities further grew. Because of the economic pressure they saw themselves responsible to provide for their families and ensure their basic education and health. According to Kay's study, men have strong emotional bonds to their children, and their worries are maybe stronger than society sees it. However, her interviewees still did not see themselves in the roles of nurturing the child, unless the father was raising kids without a wife (Kay 2006).

2.2 Fatherhood and Masculinity

Displaying care and warmth is often deemed as more natural for females than for males. In many cultures, predispositions towards displaying emotions are frequently assumed to be non-masculine. For example, study by Lewis and Clift (2001), exploring young people's understanding of masculinity and femininity in an Estonian context, demonstrates that participants often viewed men as less emotional beings, with need of to earn and provide. While women, on the contrary, were viewed as emotional and weak, in need of care and protection (Lewis et al. 2001). In the societies where gender behaviors and patterns are strictly divided, fathers' emotional involvement in child raising is assumed to be unmasculine and even sometimes shameful. The ways in which masculinity is expressed and connected with the term fatherhood is quite complex. To be more specific, in the biological sense impregnation of a woman may be the symbol of masculinity and the way in which one can prove one's masculine identity; however, in social world, day to day activities of actual "fathering" are normally not

marker of a masculine man. ‘Fathering is tied to manliness only as a demonstration of virility – the ability to produce a child - not as the conduct of caretaking and nurturing’ (Dowd, 2000, p. 183 in Lamb ME 2004. P 177). A number of studies have documented that the expressions of traditional masculinity tends to be stronger in patriarchal societies. Studies conducted on the perceptions of gender roles and stereotypes in the Georgian community once again confirm the country’s persisting patriarchal order. Since one of my research’s specific goals is to find out the correlation between masculinity and fatherhood, relevant studies covering these topics will be introduced.

Linda Richter and Robert Morrell (2006) describe fatherhood in the South African context and its strong bonds to masculinity and manhood. According to Richter and Morrell (2006), South African fathers are often absent in their children’s and wives’ lives. This is not only because of the labor migration, but also due to the strong patriarchal system which is dominant in South African societies (ibid).

From the way fatherhood is displayed in the South African context, one can see that it is firmly connected with fathers’ masculine identities. For a South African man, being a good father might be expressed in taking the responsibility for paternity, supporting the child and being a good role model. Emotional relationship with children is not considered masculine and financial support is what counts. Thus, if a father is unable to provide financial stability for his family he is not considered as a “good father” even if he would be a caring father, supporting his children in emotional or in any other ways.

The discussions on conflicts between masculinity and building intimate relationships between father and his child can also be found in Sveva Magaraggia’s article “Tensions between fatherhood and the social construction of masculinity in Italy” (2012). The study discusses fathers’ endeavors to display emotional involvement with their children (0–3 years). While doing so, Magaraggia describes tensions between existing models of fatherhood and hegemonic masculinity. Using biographical-narrative research, conducted with Italian fathers aged between 20 and 37 years the study shows how dominant forms of masculinity can hinder “development” of the involved fathering practices. Magaraggia (2012) argues that intimate relationships between fathers and children are based on the aspects which masculinity oppresses, specifically on: *emotions*, *affectivity*, and *physical closeness*.

According to Magaraggia (2012), public discourse emphasizes the importance of father’s involvement in child care while at the same time notions of hegemonic masculinity exist in the

society, which stresses father's breadwinning roles. These contradictions create tensions between practices, desires and social norms (Magaraggia 2012). Thus, fathers' behaviors seem to be dependent on a broad range of factors and those eager to be more involved fathers, must deal with social stereotypes and are unable to incorporate innovative behavior (Starace, 2000 in Magaraggia 2012). Magaraggia (2012) emphasizes that the influence of traditional gender norms becomes particularly significant if compared to the ways of describing motherhood; child care and child rearing is seen as a natural instinct of a woman. As other researchers have highlighted (e.g. Rosh White, 1994), common sense interpretations and social expectations concerning maternal and paternal care result in different standards by which we judge care (Magaraggia 2012). Specifically, Magaraggia asserts that men are allowed to use work responsibilities as the reason for not being involved in child care, while for women such an excuse might turn into a harsh social judgment.

Magaraggia (2012) also notes that fathers often perceive the interaction with newborns as helping the mothers, as the infant has not yet developed cognitive skills necessary to be involved in verbal interactions. According to her study, fathers often expressed that during the early stages of child development, they found it hard to perceive their parenting roles. Lack of communication between the father and a child can create inconsistency between their relationship and often increases emotional distance between them (ibid).

Magaraggia (2012) states that, in Italian society, masculinity is still valued and thus male identities still continue to be expressed through their public activities rather than domestic life practices. Hence, as mentioned before, men who wish to contribute more to the child development, are restricted and handicapped by the social masculine norms (ibid).

In addition to this, masculinity can also influence father's approaches to child raising and define gendered priorities (Lamb 2010). That is, fathers who display traditional masculine behavior often raise children differently compared to those with a less masculine identity (ibid). Lamb (2010) notes that, in case of long cohabitation with a masculine father, children develop strongly defined gendered stereotypes. Additionally, masculine fathers tend to provoke certain "masculine" behaviors in their sons (e.g., playing football, doing sports). In such cases, children trying to meet their parents' expectations, often start to display certain masculine traits ("modeling behavior") (Lamb, 2010). Thus, as literature illustrates, masculinity has a big role in shaping the paternal behavior. Gender identity of a parent often shapes parent's approach towards child raising. The studies discussed above provide a solid foundation for me to discuss

Georgian fathers' experiences and struggles to combine masculine behaviors with fathering practices.

2.3 Combining Work and Family Life – Coping Strategies of Men

With the emergence of new fathering roles, recent studies have focused on men's balancing strategies to cope between family and public life (Halrynjo 2009). Sigtona Halrynjo (2009) states that, although women's adaptation to work has been thoroughly studied, for men full-time workload model has been taken for granted. Her article "Men's Work-life Conflict: Career, Care and Self-realization: Patterns of Privileges and Dilemmas" explores men's work-life compromises by drawing on a sample of 102 European men, aged 21–64, working in different work organizations. Both qualitative and quantitative methods have been used in the study. The 102 male interviewees worked in various organizations in Spain, Israel, Germany, Austria, Bulgaria and Norway.

The author's analysis of the empirical data shows that even within this all-male sample, the distribution of working life privileges corresponds with a high amount of paid employment and a low deal of care responsibilities. As a general note, Halrynjo (2009) states that those men who work most, spend less time on childcare and housework. However, those who work the least do not necessarily undertake most childcare.

According Halrynjo (2009) the pattern of work and care, based on the men-only sample, resembles the gendered division in society. This division is often explained through a lens of the gendered labor market in which men and women work in different sectors with diverse expectation in terms of work contribution. The typical pattern includes reduced working hours for women for the purpose of combining work and family life, generally employed in educational, health and social sectors, where they work for fewer hours and thus have less career opportunities (Bradley, 1999; Crompton, 2006 in Halrynjo, 2009). Additionally, the number and age of children were often the influential factors for women's adaptation towards work hours. Such pattern does not appear in case of men.

Different work-life adaptations imply different possibilities and challenges when it comes to privileges like career opportunities and job security. Halrynjo develops a typology in order to group participants according to their adaptation and coping strategies; Four positions are

identified: the *'career'* position, the *'care'* position, the *'care and career'* position and the *'patchwork career'* position.

The career position. According to the article, men placed in such position have good career opportunities, high work security with permanent work contracts, earn more than their partners, and hardly contribute anything to domestic and care work. These men express dissatisfaction with their working hours, leisure time and social life. They want to work less but consider it impossible in this position.

The care position. In the position opposite to the career position, the author places men who work part time with substantial domestic work and care responsibilities who earn less than their partners. Men in this category were relatively satisfied with their work and leisure time. Thus, expected less career opportunities but were concerned about their job security. Also, Halrynjo notes that men grouped in the given category are often considered as “new men” who are nurturing parents. This is because they challenge the stereotypical male worker model by reducing their working hours and increasing time spent with the family.

Care and career position. The care and career men work full time while at the same time are actively engaged in raising their children together with their partner. These men usually experience a lack of leisure time. According to Cooper (2000 in Halrynjo 2009) this care orientation is “stressful and overwhelming”, as in addition to demands from public life, these men are at the same time responsible for needs of the family. Thus, they often feel that they “sacrifice themselves” (Cooper, 2000 in Halrynjo 2009, p. 114).

The patchwork career position. Patchwork career men are only minimally employed, often as freelancers patching together different kinds of jobs with artistic or other forms of self fulfilling work. As noted by the author, men in this position are often involved in various activities as they possess sufficient free time. Although they have lower potential for career development, they are not worried and stressed about it. However, condensed working hours don't necessarily imply that they are busy with care activities. They are mainly satisfied with their public life and leisure time they possess.

The article shows that no matter which position men hold, they all struggle in order to maintain balance between the family and social life. Men working overtime in leading positions are dissatisfied with their working time and state that they want to work less. However, they consider time reduction impossible if they want to keep their job and their career. In contrast, employees working part-time without permanent employment find some difficulty in extending

their working time. Halrynjo (2009) also emphasizes that, in order for men to achieve a state where they will devote equal attention to the family and work, organizational and public policies are required which will enable men to remain as involved fathers and good workers at the same time.

2.4 New Fatherhood

According to McGill (2014) the model of new fatherhood implies men's increased participation in child care alongside with his breadwinner role. These "contemporary" fathers are likely to share household duties with the spouses and undertake everyday caregiving tasks. However, due to scarcity of time, it's hard to be a good provider and a good caregiver at the same time (McGill 2014). As mentioned in the previous sections, in the countries with strongly differentiated gender roles and high employment rates for women, mothers are often experiencing double burden problem in combining work and family life. In addition to this, research shows that, when a man becomes a parent, he often works and earns more than he did before (Kaufman & Uhlenberg, 2000 in McGill 2014). In such cases, of course, his participation in child care or domestic life significantly diminishes. Additionally, factors such as age, number of children, and gender are found to have an influence on father's level of involvement. Specifically, in case of young and numerous children, father's involvement tend to be lower, while the presence of a son is often associated with higher engagement (Raley & Bianchi, 2006 in *ibid*).

In the UNDP report (2014) on "Gender-related Development Index (GDI), Scandinavian countries occupy leading positions, where Norway is the first country in the list. In Norway, women have 80 % of working hours alongside with high fertility rate – 1.8 (Brandth and Kvande 2009). Thus, when discussing "new fatherhood" it is important to bring examples from the researches in a Scandinavian context. Recent studies of how Scandinavian men relate to family and parenthood have shown a strong family orientation among fathers (Johansson 2011). Although Scandinavian men's participation in housework is high, primary responsibility for the children and the home is still undertaken by women (Plantin 2001, 2003, Haavind & Magnusson 2005 in Johansson 2011). However, Scandinavian men indeed demonstrate an increased interest in caring towards children, which is understood as a sign of the changing hegemonic masculinity (Johansson 2011).

Ingrid Bø (2008) looks into a sample of dual-earner Norwegian couples' families and observes its practices. Bø highlights that Norwegian fathers indeed demonstrate increased participation and interest in child raising. According to her study, fathers actively participated in child care during mornings and evenings. Fathers also were responsible for picking up children from child care centers and even stayed at home with them in case of children's sickness. Bø states that the given behavior is a definite sign that traditional gender norms have been alerted and modified (Bø, 2008). However, in her article, Bø not only highlights the positive steps in terms of men's participation in family life, but emphasizes patterns of inequality as well. According to the study, fathers' involvement in childcare is higher than in household labor. Thus, mothers still have higher workload (ibid). As discussed below, such a pattern was also visible in the example of Swedish men. Bø's study shows that although fathers' helped their wives in terms of household labor and child care, mothers still had higher responsibility for food and clothing. Mothers were actively engaged in initiating changes and reminding routines of child care to their partners (ibid).

In order to look from the perspectives of men, the article "The construction of the new father: how middle-class men become present fathers" by Johansson (2011) will be discussed. The article presents a study conducted in Sweden, in the second largest city - Gothenburg. Twenty men on paternity leave were selected to find out why Swedish men decide to share parental leave with their partners. The three main themes are explained: motives and values influencing shared parenting; ways of looking at career issues and time distribution between public and domestic life, and the construction of masculinity.

Johansson's findings show that for the vast majority of men, the decision of taking paternity leave was very natural and they never doubted whether it was the right one. They expressed that parenthood is not only women's responsibility. Moreover, they approached it as the one way to relax from work and enjoy the time with their family. However, the article also highlights that, although men shared activities within household with their spouses, they did not necessarily have similar views on gender issues. Specifically, some participants who reported sharing the domestic and parental workload acknowledged that certain tasks remained gender-based and some men were critical of what they saw as more radical feminist positions (Johansson 2011). The article also illustrates that participants were aware that gender differences were socially constructed terms, rather than natural phenomena. Additionally, Johansson (2011) suggests that shift from the hegemonic masculinity to a more humanistic masculine behavior is to be evident. He coins changing patterns of fathering practices and

men's increased participation in household labor as the positive step in the process of traditional masculinity transformation. Johansson (2011) states that fathers also reflected on the state policies to contribute to gender equal society. He explains that, while some men welcomed this idea, others perceived it as the state's involvement in their family lives. The article asserts that Swedish employers were mainly promoting paternity leave, however in some cases men experienced a possible decrease in the career performance (Haas & Hwang 1999 in Johansson 2011). In some instances, the interviewees had already worked and made their careers. Instead of aiming at climbing higher on a career path and earning more money, family life and children were valued more (Johansson 2011).

All in all, studies in Scandinavian context certainly confirm positive changes in understanding gender norms, in masculine behavior, and in men's participation in childcare and household labor. However, as emphasized by Bø (2008), some aspects of gender equality are yet to be tackled. It has been recognized by many researchers that, Scandinavian success in terms of gender equality and fathers' increased participation in child care, are the results of family policies' transformation. Trine Annfelt (2008) states that family policies in Norway have replaced "old fatherhood" with a "new fatherhood", indicating changes in understanding father's roles and increased responsibilities towards the children.

2.5 Georgian Context

As mentioned above, studies related primarily to Georgian fathers' understanding of paternal roles and their practices is quite limited. Researches in the relevant context mainly cover gender perceptions in society and among the youth. However, currently the interest towards men's participation in domestic life has increased, which lead to recent research focusing on men's involvement in the family life and their approaches towards gender relations.

The studies on gender roles and stereotypes in Georgian society demonstrate the country's patriarchal setup. Financial independence of a woman in many cases is not a guarantee for the equal distribution of domestic labor and child care duties in the family. According to the Gender Asymmetry Index results, the level of inequality in Georgian families is highest where both parents are employed (Japaridze et.al 2014). In families, men's superiority in decision making has been documented in number of studies. According to "The Study of Georgian Youth's Awareness, Perceptions and Attitudes of Gender Equality" in the families where women are

economically independent, men still possess higher decision-making power (Japaridze et.al 2014). Sumbadze (2011) in his study “generations and values” asserts that, 62% of young people agreed with the statement that decisions in the family should be made according to men’s wishes, 66.7% of middle-aged people also agreed with the same statement and in case of eldest age group 77.5% supported the given opinion. The increased percentage in the elder age groups, indicates older generations’ stronger patriarchal values.

As mentioned in the introduction, the family should always come first for the “real” Georgian women. The research report on “Public perceptions on gender equality in politics and business”, prepared by the UNDP (2013) asserts that, 87% of women and 88% of men agreed with the opinion that “having a job is good but woman most of all wants family and children” (UNDP report 2013, p.35). Thus, due to these values women often refuse to undertake “the next step” in their professional careers. The above mentioned study demonstrates a huge gender gap with regards to the domestic labor. It shows that women undertake the largest part of the domestic work, whereas men’s share doesn’t exceed 24 %.

The researches focusing on gender roles and perceptions demonstrate interesting results regarding preference of having a son. The reasons for this were men’s “ability” to continue the family name and the assumption that a son will take care of father’s property, which according to Georgian traditions is passed on to the son, while the daughter leaves home and moves to another family (Japaridze et.al 2014). Furthermore, the fact that 45 percent of all the inquired respondents prefer to have a son in case they are given only one option, definitely demonstrates men’s perceived dominant position in the Georgian society (UNDP report, 2013).

The study “Men and Gender relationships in Georgia” (2014) was conducted by the Georgian Non-governmental organization 'Institute of Social Studies and Analysis' (ISSA) in order to examine men’s involvement in child-raising activities among other types of involvement in the household. The purpose of the study was to explore men’s and women’s attitudes and opinions about gender roles and get to know their practical gendered behaviors. According to the study, when asked about the labor division between men and women within the household the duties were divided quite unevenly. Tidying the house, washing, maintaining order in the house, preparing meals and raising the child were named as basic activities for a woman. Men’s duties mainly involved repairing household things. Following the study, such gendered behavior is based on the “learned behavior”. A big percentage of girls (82%-92%) were encouraged to learn and practice “woman’s work” in households and respectively men were encouraged to

practice man's work. Interestingly, from the results of the study 86% of men and 72% of women are satisfied with such divisions of household labor.

As regards to the men's involvement in child-raising activities, the study indicated that child rearing remains as woman's primary responsibility, and it is not shared with the spouse. To be more specific, within the child's age range 0-6, 42% of men indicated that they never change diapers for the baby, as well as never feed and shower them. They never participate in the activities connected with the kitchen or the bathroom and their core activities involve playing or talking with children and in some cases reading. The percentage of men who participate in feeding, showering, changing diapers, taking children for a walk and reading, among others, is no more than 18%. Within the child's age range 7-12, fathers replace reading with playing and proportion of such men is 81%. However, the majority of them never prepare meals, wash clothes or reads books, and the ones who do so are no more than 7%. As the child grows the father's involvement diminishes. For the age range of 13-18 the proportion of men who participate in choosing the reading literature for their children, seeing school teachers or helping with homework is no more than 5%. Moreover and very interestingly, according to the study more than half of the respondents agreed that the gender balance and equality are already achieved in Georgia.

An interesting comparative study was conducted in order to disclose changes in gender attitudes among youth (with the age range of 18 – 25). The secondary data of the surveys from 1996, 2008, and 2010 years were retrieved and analyzed. The results revealed two significant patterns. The first tendency is that no substantial changes have been identified in gender attitudes of youth since 1996. Second tendency claims that traditional masculinity is still highly valued by Georgian young people and no significant modifications have been detected (Japaridze et al. 2013). All in all, the results show that despite many socio-political and economic changes, traditional gender norms still prevail among Georgian youth (ibid).

2.5 My Contributions

As already mentioned in the introduction, the complexity and fluidity of fatherhood requires a multi-dimensional approach, and the ways in which fatherhood can be discussed and researched are various. I have carefully chosen the literature which I believe will help me

analyze my findings through various lenses. Despite the fact that some of the studies presented in this chapter are relatively old, their nature and focus provide relevant knowledge for my research.

The studies discussed in the global context have helped me discuss fatherhood trends across the world. While studies in Georgian society have provided local background for my research; more importantly, knowing global and national contexts have helped me understand where Georgian fatherhood stands in relation to other fathering practices. Specifically, studies in the worldwide context indicate that strongly segregated gender roles and masculinity are not attributions that are limited to the Georgian community.

Struggles between masculine ideas and new fatherhood practices appear to be familiar for many fathers across the world. However, while discussing fatherhood in Scandinavia, one can see that changes toward a more gender equal society are possible, where family policies carry particular importance. Based on the Georgian studies, one can recognize the patriarchal norms of the society. Strong gendered models are evident in every social realm of the country, whether private or public. The study on male involvement in domestic life (see above) illustrates that Georgian fathers are not yet ready to undertake involved fathering roles. However, the quantitative nature of the study does not present father's explanations, reasons, attitudes, and perspectives regarding their roles in society and as fathers.

Although the discussed literature provides valuable knowledge to understand fatherhood, in many directions knowledge of the topic is still limited. Firstly, many of the studies discussed above are of a quantitative nature. This, of course, limits the opportunity for in-depth understanding of the given phenomena. Secondly, as already mentioned, fatherhood is rarely researched from the father's personal standpoint. Thirdly, and very importantly, studies in the global and Georgian context hardly exhibit social change within different generations of fathers. Thus, these are the major gaps I intend to explore with my research.

Knowing the overall picture of fatherhood in the global and local arena, my research, due to its qualitative nature, will exhibit details in understanding fatherhood. This will provide in-depth understanding of the phenomena for the worldwide and local context as well. Focusing explicitly on the fathers' personal experiences, I will bring new, in depth, and necessary knowledge to understanding fathers' standpoints and reasons for their particular parenting behaviors and attitudes.

Discussing fatherhood from the inter-generational perspective will allow me to highlight changes and also emphasize stagnations. This will also help pinpoint suggested reasons for possible developments, or for the lack of changes. This, in turn, can contribute to helping policy makers comprehend the fluctuations involved with understanding fatherhood across generations. And most importantly, my research will open up new areas for future researchers to build upon.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005, p.4) “A theory is an organized body of concepts and principles intended to explain a particular phenomenon”. Hence, theories assist to explicate “How” and “Why” something operates in a particular pattern (Johnson and Christensen, 2007, p. 7). For the purpose of explaining my empirical findings, I will use three relevant conceptual frameworks. Firstly, I will discuss a particular constructionist perspective on gender; “doing gender” by West and Zimmerman (1987). This perspective will be applied to conceptualize father’s practices within the household. It will help me to elaborate on how men, as parents, display their gender identities by avoiding or performing certain activities. I will employ the “Social cognitive theory”, a perspective on gender identity development discussed by Kay Bussey (2011), as my second conceptual framework. The social cognitive theory elaborates on how gender perceptions are constructed through the complex mix of experiences. It will be helpful to discuss how fathers’ gender identities are shaped and remade through experiences as the men age. In addition, social cognitive theory also explores parents’ different relations towards their daughters and sons, as well as the consequences of such segregation, something which will aid me to explain fathers’ interactions with their children. In order to explore and examine the correlation between masculinity and fatherhood, Connell’s theory of *Masculinity* will be applied as my third conceptual framework. It will enable me to explore how fathers’ parenting practices are formed by their masculine identities and vice versa. The theory will also help me to explore whether “good” fathering practices come in conflict with ideas of the “proper” masculine man from the perspective of Georgian fathers.

3.2 Doing Gender

According to West and Zimmerman (1987), gender is a performed activity that is characteristic of situations and interactions. Based on gender perceptions and stereotypes, actors are “held accountable” for displaying and reconfirming the “appropriate” gender in their relations. However, to understand gender and the ways in which it is displayed in our relationships, it is important to underline the differences between *sex*, *sex category*, and *gender*. According to West and Zimmerman (1987) *sex* is a biologically fixed criteria classifying a person either as male or female (ibid: 127). Assignment to the one or the other *sex category* is attained through “application” of the sex criteria (ibid). However, it is possible to claim membership in one of the sex categories, even though some of the “sex criteria” are absent (ibid). *Gender* is the pattern of behavior appropriate for a particular sex category. Further, Ridgeway and Correll (2004) state that by categorizing others, we also sex categorize ourselves in relationship to that “other”. Ridgeway (2009) notes that such categorization helps to define “self” and the “other”, enabling people to know how to act and what actions to expect. Ridgeway and Correll (2004, p.510) also explain the social nature of a gender, stating “gender is not primarily an identity or role that is taught in childhood and enacted in family relations. Instead, gender is an institutionalized system of social practices for constituting people as two significantly different categories, men and women, and organizing social relations of inequality on the basis of that difference”.

As individuals enter a social setting it requires them to define themselves in relation to others; that is to display their gender with the appropriate behavior and their default expectation is that others will treat them accordingly taking into account the “hegemonic gender beliefs” (Ridgeway and Correll 2004). As noted by Goffman, when individuals interact with others, they believe that each of them possess the “essential nature – nature that can be discerned through the natural signs given off or expressed by them” (Goffman 1976 in West and Zimmerman 1987, p. 129). Goffman formulates gender display in the following way: “If gender can be defined as the culturally established correlates of sex (whether in consequence of biology or learning), then gender display refers to conventionalized portrayals of these correlates” (ibid: p. 129).

According to West and Zimmerman (1987) gender display typically involves highlighting the differences between masculinity and femininity. For example, domestic work is a verification of women as good wives and mothers, while working outside the home is considered favorable

for men to be recognized as good husbands and fathers. Doing child care is a display of femininity for women, while not performing child care activities confirms men's masculine identity (Berk, 1985 in West and Zimmerman, 1987, p.144). Any deviation from the given social normative can lead to a harsh social judgment; men and women are "held socially accountable" for displaying their gender appropriately (West and Zimmerman, 1987). According to West and Zimmerman (1987), although gender is "done" by an individual, it only obtains meaning when performed in the presence of others. Thus, gender role and gender display emphasize the behavioral aspects of being male or female, in relationship to each other.

Ridgeway and Correll (2004) suggest that cultural beliefs about gender are formed in the process of sex categorization, and behavioral expectations in terms of gender beliefs are utterly evoked in a social rational context. Therefore, "gender beliefs are always implicitly available to shape individuals' evaluations and behavior" (ibid: p.515). Ridgeway and Correll (2004, p.514) formulate, "hegemonic cultural beliefs provide a blueprint for doing gender in most settings where individuals consider themselves relative to others". Ridgeway (2009), argues that gender stereotypes shape our behavior, independently of the fact that we might be aware of such stereotypes' existence. According to her standpoint, because we assume that most people are endorsed by stereotypical gender perceptions, we expect to be judged according to those perceptions. Specifically, stereotypical opinions are taken into account while interacting with others, even though one might not support them. Thus, cultural perceptions act as guidelines for gender behavior (ibid: p. 5).

Connell (2009: 73) notes that gender practice is shaped by the "gender order" of the society we live in. She defines gender order as the "set of the relationships" where people are "responsible" to perform appropriate gender behavior. According to her, gender relationships are continuously "made and re-made". She asserts: "we make our own gender, but we are not free to make it however we like" (Connell 2009, p. 74). This is another way of explaining the insight that gender is something one "does" rather than "is".

West and Zimmerman (1987) argues that doing gender requires "interactional situations", where a masculine behavior is a response to a feminine act. As an example, they present a case where man takes woman's arm to guide across the street, while woman enables him to do so (ibid: p.135). In this case, the masculine behavior is fulfilled by the feminine act, which makes the gender behavior is seen and recognized, which according to West and Zimmerman (1987) is a successful performance of gender conduct. In addition to this, individuals are accorded the

numerous situations to display their gender on the everyday basis. Specifically, West and Zimmerman express that a person possesses many social identities; one can be a husband, father, employer, citizen or a friend among others. However, one always remains male or female. This in return, provides an endless resource for doing gender in diverse circumstances. Ridgeway and Correll (2004) formulate it as a “gender background”, saying that our gender identity always influences our behavior.

Gender display is often seen in terms of labor division. It is quite frequent that the tasks are labeled as “female” or “male” work, since it is deemed that one or the other type of labor might be more relevant for one’s “essential nature” (West and Zimmerman 1987, p.144). West and Zimmerman build on Berk’s (1985) argument on household labor division, and her approaches towards married couples’ positions. According to Berk, the vast majority of tasks in a household, including child care, are undertaken by the woman, regardless of her employment status. However, she highlights that such arrangement is often regarded comfortable and “fair” for the family members. She argues that this is often seen as the result of gender performance, where women “do gender as they do housework and child care, by which both material and symbolic products of the household are realized” (West and Zimmerman 1987, p. 144). Thus, such arrangements are not due to the fact that it is the “woman’s work”, rather for women to do so and for men not to be engaged is the demonstration of their “essential natures” (ibid: p. 144).

Lastly, West and Zimmerman (1987) highlight that doing gender is resulting in positioning man and woman in a hierarchy, where men are dominant and women subordinate. West and Zimmerman cite Frye’s work: “That we are trained to behave so differently as women and men, and to behave so differently towards women and men, itself contributes mightily to the appearance of extreme dimorphism, but also, the ways we act as women and men, mold our bodies and minds to shape the subordination and dominance. We do become what we practice being” (Frye 1983, in West and Zimmerman 1987, p. 146).

Although the above mentioned concepts of doing gender (West and Zimmerman 1987) are relatively old, it is still relevant in the contemporary world; especially in the case of Georgia. They are particularly relevant as they will enable me to assess the household labor division in terms of gender performance and display. This will also be a useful framework in understanding of father’s involvement in child care activities. The concepts will also assist me in explaining father’s opinions about gender roles and duties.

3.3 Social Cognitive Theory: Gender Identity Development

“To most people, being a man or a woman is above all a matter of personal experience. It is something involved in the way we grow up, the way we conduct family life and sexual relationships, the way we present ourselves in everyday situations, and the way we see ourselves.” (Connell 2009:94).

As discussed in the previous section, according to West and Zimmerman (1987), it is the social norms and requirements that predispose our behavior. Connell (2009) recognizes the hegemonic power of the “gender order”, she also asserts that, „learners”(individuals) are not merely passive participants in the gender learning processes. As she formulates it: “The boys and girls here are not lying back and letting the gender norms wash over them” (Connell, 2009: 96). According to Connell, (2009) “Learning gender” is a bilateral process where individuals actively participate in this process. Social cognitive theory on gender identity development tries to look at the gender learning process at an individual level. It recognizes social factors in shaping one’s gender identity and describes the active participation of the person in such processes. To understand thoroughly how fathers’ gender identities are shaped and the ways in which their gender identities are transformed as they age, perspective on gender identity development will be discussed. The concept will also be valuable while discussing young people’s opinions.

In her article “Gender identity development” Bussey provides the analysis of gender identity development on the basis of the social cognitive theory. According to her, social cognitive theory explores the development of an individual’s gender conceptions and its transformation. The social cognitive theory views a person’s gender identity as the part of one’s personal identity (Bussey & Bandura, 1999 in Bussey 2011). Bussey argues that the identity formation is a continuous process, transformed and modified during life through number of social experiences.

Bussey distinguishes the social cognitive approach from social science and psychological approaches. From the sociological perspective gender differences are results of sociocultural practices. In contrast to the social science approach, which debates on how gender identities are embedded in societal structures, psychological perspectives focus on the processes by which individuals come to see themselves in gender-differentiated ways and adopt gender-differentiated behaviors in the first place (Bussey 2011). It should be noted that psychological

perspective does not contradict with the social science approach, but it describes gender identity development from an individual standpoint.

According to the social cognitive approach, identity formation is an essential part of the individual development (Bandura, 2008, in Bussey 2011). Personal experiences, as well as relations towards others and self-reflections, contribute to the development of perceptions of personal identity. From the social cognitive perspective, gender identity does not follow predictable age-correlated patterns connected to biological sex, rather it differs between individuals and across their life span. Bussey (2011, p. 607) asserts, “Gender identity develops not only from self-knowledge of one’s biological sex, but also from an interplay between personal and social factors”.

Following Bussey, children’s gender plays a crucial role for how parents treat them, which in turn greatly influences the child’s gender identity development. Formation of the gender identity is not only affected by parents’ attitudes, but it involves broader scales of social influences, such as media, peers, and teachers among others. However, Bussey notes that from the perspective of social cognitive theory the importance of gender in the construction of identity is not equally important for all individuals, “centrality of children’s gender identity will depend on the extent to which they anticipate approval from others and anticipate feelings of pride for behaving in ways similar to those of their gender, and on the extent to which they believe they are capable of undertaking activities performed by others of their gender, all of which may vary in different contexts” (Bussey 2011, p. 612). Bussey argues that males and females receive different judgments for performing the same activities. Therefore, already in the early childhood, children have the anticipation of specific social outcomes about specific behaviors (Bussey & Bandura, 1992 in Bussey 2011). According to Bussey, parents’ influence on child’s gender identity development is critical, as they implicitly emphasize the importance of the gender regarding various activities. In addition, Raag & Rackliff (1998 in Bussey 2011) also state that fathers are more likely to inform their sons of the possible outcomes of their behavior related to their gender.

Bussey (2011) in her article describes the factors that influence the development of gender identity. She lists *modeling*, *enactive experience*, and *direct tuition* as the three major “sociocognitive motivators” related to gender identity.

Modeling provides information about anticipated behavior based on gender and serves to emphasize the significance of gender in various activities. According to Bussey: “People do

not simply emulate models' behavior in its entirety. People pay attention to different models and to different aspects of modeled behavior, they selectively commit the modeled behavior to memory, their capacity to emulate modeled behavior varies, and their enactment of the modeled activity depends on anticipated social and self-sanctions and self-efficacy beliefs associated with enacting it" (ibid: p. 617). Additionally, she also notes that, although boys and girls observe both genders, they often choose to pay particular attention to models of their own gender. Bussey highlights that in the societies where gender differences are very strong imitators have more motivation to be like their models.

Enactive experience in Bussey's work stands in relation to various gender-related behaviors. Specifically, girls can learn that performing gender appropriate feminine conducts will lead to social acceptance and performing masculine conducts can result in disapproval. Thus, children become aware of the importance of gender and its display (Bussey 2011).

Direct tuition is a form of social influence where parents encourage and direct children to choose activities "appropriate" to their gender. For example, parents may not allow their daughters to play football or other masculine sports; while sons are often encouraged to do so.

Bussey argues that parents play a significant role in the shaping of children's gender identity. Based on different studies in this field, she highlights that parents shape a child's gender identity even before interacting with them, by furnishing the infant's room, choosing the clothes and selecting names according to the gender, followed by providing gender associated activities for them. In addition to this, Bussey mentions that parents' feedbacks to children's conduct are also vastly gendered. Referring to other authors' work, she underlines that parents who support stereotypical gender norms promote gender segregated activities in their children. Regarding this, Bussey mentions the cross-gender dimensions, stating that "boys are sanctioned harder for cross-gendered conduct than girls are, and fathers enforce gender-stereotypical behavior in their sons more than in their daughters" (Bussey 2011 p. 619).

The above-stated discussions illustrate how individuals learn their gender identity through different stages of life. Social cognitive theory on gender identity development recognizes the importance of social factors and describes how individuals respond to those factors. As all individuals, fathers as well possess gender identities. Knowing of factors influencing gender identity development will enable me to reflect how fathers' childhood and life experiences contributed to their particular perceptions and conducts about fatherhood. Considering Georgian society's strong patriarchal values, along with the findings on fathers' own

relationships with their parents and their perceptions of good fatherhood, the above mentioned conceptual tool will enable me to discuss my results from different dimensions. In addition to this, it will be valuable while evaluating fathers' attitudes towards their sons and daughters.

3.4 Theory of Masculinity

Social cognitive theory on gender identity development captures the processes through which masculinity is developed and remade during life. As mentioned above, since parents provide modeling behavior for their children, social cognitive theory coins the importance of fathers in child's masculine identity development processes. In this regard, fathers who possess stronger gender stereotypes, tend to invoke more gendered specific behavior in their children (Lamb 2010). R. W. Connell in her book "Masculinities" (1995) asserts that masculinity should be seen in the context of the relationships between men and women, and therefore it can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting. She argues that "Masculinity is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practice through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality, and culture" (ibid: p.71). Connell (1987) asserts that masculinity always stands in contrast to femininity. That is, masculinity and femininity are "inherently relational" concepts, obtaining their meanings only in relation to each other. However, masculinity occupies a privileged position in relation to femininity. Hence, referring to West and Zimmerman (1987), men are held more accountable for displaying the appropriate gender; men who oppose socially constructed gender stereotypes face more severe judgments than women who disobey the set gendered expectations.

Men often experience social pressure to conform to dominant ideas of manhood (Carrigan, Connell and Lee 1985, in Cornwall 1997, p.11). Such dominant dimensions of masculinity are coined as "hegemonic masculinity" by Connell (1995). Deriving the concept of 'hegemony' from Antonio Gramsci, Connell defined hegemonic masculinity in the following way: "Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Connell 1995, p.77).

Hegemonic masculinity is associated with dominance and power, which can be displayed by certain behaviors and acts. Such power behavior varies between cultures and societies (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994). However, not all men conform to the standards of hegemonic masculinity, and those who fail to benefit from it often become subjects of discrimination (Cornwall 1997, p.11). The concept of hegemonic masculinity is traditionally defined as the most ‘honored and desired’ way of being a man. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argued that hegemonic masculinities and gender hierarchies are historical constructs and can change with time. To say that a particular form of masculinity¹ is hegemonic means "that its exaltation stabilizes a structure of dominance and oppression in the gender order as a whole. To be culturally exalted, the pattern of masculinity must have exemplars who are celebrated as heroes" (Connell, 1990 in Donaldson 1993, p. 647). In addition to this, Wetherell and Edley (1999 in Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) suggest men can accommodate hegemonic masculinity according to their needs and circumstances. In this regard, one's masculinity can be modified through different life experiences.

One of my objectives is to explore the correlation between fatherhood and masculinities. Thus, theory of masculinity will enable me to discuss to what extent are fatherhood practices influenced by the ideas of Georgian masculine men. What are the practices which enable fathers to remain a “masculine man” and a “good father” at the same time? Does being a good father come in conflict with the image of a masculine man? Apart from this, the theory provides a core conceptual tool to find out how fathers’ perceptions vary in different stages of life, it can also help me to analyze how the idea of masculinity changes with age, and whether it’s followed by the changing of fathering practices. The concept is particularly relevant to my study since it will provide the reasons for men’s absence or participation in the child care or household labor. In addition to this, by adopting the concept of hegemonic masculinity I will reflect on social norms for fathering practices from the fathers’ standpoint.

¹ In addition to hegemonic masculinity, according to Connell, there are subordinate and complicit masculinities as well. However, these forms are not relevant for my empirical findings and thus, will not be elaborated further.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will provide an overview of the methodology of my research. I will describe the process of planning and entering the field, research area, selection and recruitment of the study participants, the process of obtaining informed consent, ethical considerations, data analysis, reflexivity, and challenges I have faced during the research. I will also discuss the methods I have used for my research and reasons for choosing them. As illustrated in the literature review, the majority of studies conducted in Georgia use mixed - qualitative and quantitative methods in the data collection process. Since a qualitative method describes life words “from inside out”, from the perspectives of people who participate (Flick, 2004), I considered it as the best option to explore the changing perceptions of fatherhood in the Georgian society. According to Creswell “Qualitative researchers, tend to use open-ended questions so that participants can express their views” (Creswell, 2003, p. 9).

4.2 Study Area

Georgia (საქართველო) is located at the crossroads of Western Asia and Eastern Europe. To the west it is bordered by the Black Sea, to the north by Russia, to the south by Turkey and Armenia, and to the southeast by Azerbaijan. According to the Census Georgia had 4, 490 500 inhabitants, of which 1 175 200 live in the Capital, Tbilisi (თბილისი) (National Statistics Office of Georgia). Tbilisi is the largest city of Georgia. It is also the most important political and cultural center of the country. The majority of Georgian population speaks Georgian, which is the only written language and is used by all Georgians across the country. Considering this, I, as a native Georgian, did not have any language barriers and a need of an interpreter during my fieldwork.



From the very beginning, I have been determined to conduct my research in Tbilisi. My decision was derived from my research topic and the research questions I have chosen. Specifically, one of my study objectives was to examine the generational changes in understanding of fatherhood among fathers. For exploring social change it would be more appropriate to study the most “developed part” of the country. Another reason for choosing the mentioned study area was my recruitment strategy, which was based on using my own social network to find informants. Despite the fact that I am not from the capital, during the last seven years I was living in Tbilisi. This means that I have my peer friends, ex-co-workers, lecturers and simply acquaintances in Tbilisi who would be accessible and likely to help me in the recruitment process. Thus, being familiar with the city and having a network of people, influenced my decision of choosing the study area.

4.3 Entering the field and the Recruitment of Study Participants

As I mentioned above, I was not born in the capital and my family lives in another city of Georgia. Because of this, I don't have a house or a flat in Tbilisi, where I could live permanently. Thus, I have to rent a room every time I go to Georgia. Considering this, before leaving Bergen I had to find a flat. It was very hard since I needed it in the center of the city and only for three months and not many people are willing to lease for such short periods of time. For my research, living in the center was crucial, as I was looking for study participants from the middle class of society and most of them live in the center. Fortunately, I managed to

find a suitable flat for three months and as I moved in I was ready to start searching for my study participants.

Initially, I planned to search for my study participants using the snowballing method through “Facebook”. First of all I would conduct interviews with fathers from the younger generation and, once done, I would proceed to interview more elderly people. In between of these two phases I planned to conduct Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and participant observations. Thus, upon my arrival I published a Facebook status saying that I was looking for young fathers, who wished to volunteer and participate in my study. Unfortunately, while I gathered a lot of “likes”, no one expressed the desire to devote time and get involved in my research. Therefore, I changed my strategy. I decided to use my personal social network. Considering the fact that my friends are more or less of the same age as me, they found young fathers for me with ease. Before the end of June, I was able to finish all my eight (8) planned interviews with younger dads. My quick success of an efficient recruitment of study participants was not only thanks to my social network, but also due to the right time period. To be more specific, in summer most people go on holidays. In Tbilisi, people start going for vacations in the middle of July and vacation time reaches its peak in the middle of August. Thus, later on, when I started struggling with finding study participants I realized that the time period of the research played a huge role for finding potential interviewees.

In first days of July, I started to plan young people’s Focus Group Discussions (see below). For the younger group of mixed gender, I aimed at an age range of 20-26. I invited my friends and friends of friends’ to participate in my FGD. Being in the same age range, made it easy for me to find participants for FGD. The fact that, I was renting a separate room for living provided favorable conditions for the study. Young people seemed to be very eager to participate in FGDs as it was an unofficial gathering place and they approached it as more of a social place to get to know new people and interact with each other. In addition to this, when asking for participation, I promised snacks and drinks. I think all those mentioned elements played a crucial role in my successful recruitment of young people for my focus group. However, things didn’t go without small challenges. During my first FGD, I was excited and nervous, and although they were my friends and I wasn’t afraid of judgment, I still felt an enormous responsibility. I also became relatively stressed when some people refused to come at the very last moment, while others, who came quite late, made the rest of the participants wait for them. Fortunately, due to the informal environment the waiting tension and stress were easily outweighed by fun conversations.

After I had finished FGDs, I started searching for fathers from elder generation and also mothers for my last two focus groups (see below). It is worth mentioning, that for this time, it was already middle of July and people started to on vacations. So, at the end of July the Tbilisi was very empty. I started to organize mothers' FGDs. I was calling my ex-coworkers and mothers of my friends, as well as asking my young father interviewees to encourage their wives to participate. However, most of them have left for summer, or were too busy or "could not promise anything" – as they said. I had planned to conduct two mothers' FGDs and I was unable to get even one. Also, it should be mentioned that at this time it was unbearably hot in Tbilisi and people wanted to simply hide away from the heat and avoid any other obligations.

Thus, my plan to conduct mothers FGDs failed. However, the information from mothers was important for my research materials. Therefore, I decided to change my strategy and decided to organize interviews instead of focus groups. My decision turned out to be much more effective. Because of the flexibility of time and place, women gave me informed consent with ease. Mostly, I was visiting them at home or at work. Besides this, I carried my voice recorder everywhere, which was quite useful at some times. For example, once I went to a beauty salon just to fix my hair, with no planned interviews, and I was able to interview three mothers. Eventually, I have managed to collect eight interviews, which I considered to be enough.

While doing interviews with women, I was also searching for elder fathers. Recruitment of those became the most challenging fieldwork experience for me. First of all, as mentioned above, people were leaving for holidays. Secondly, it was hard to find men who met all the eligibility criteria: to have higher education, be above 35 and to have at least one 18-year-old child (see below). Even if I was able to find such people, they were very hard to recruit because unlike young fathers, they were not very enthusiastic to participate in my research. I was afraid that I might not manage to find all eight elder fathers before the end of summer and so I decided to search for the study participants randomly. I went out and started searching for men who, based on my judgment, looked like fathers from the older generation. I went to the nearest hospitals, supermarkets, embassies. In such a way, I found three interviewees. Fortunately, in the end, I was able to manage all the eight interviews with elder fathers successfully. Additionally, it is worth noting that all the interviews and FGDs were taped using voice recorder.

4.4 In Depth Interviews / General Interviews

My intention in this research was not to study facts, on the contrary, I was interested in finding perceptions and opinions around fatherhood. To do so, I used semi-structured open-ended questions to conduct in-depth interviews as the main method of my research. Qualitative research interviews enable a researcher to understand subjects' perceptions and experiences (Kvale, 1996). As stated by Kvale (1996) "The subjects not only answer questions prepared by an expert, but themselves formulate in a dialog their own conceptions of their lived worlds" (Kvale 1996, p. 11).

According to my plan, I conducted 16 in-depth interviews with fathers. Eight interviewees were fathers whose eldest child was maximum ten years old. Another eight interviewees were fathers who had at least one child of 18 years old (or older). The purpose of dividing generations according to child's age is that parenting experience comes after having the child. Thus, I placed fathers in the generational groups according to their first child's age. In addition to this, Most of those people were educated (having at least bachelor's degree). All of them were from the capital and had jobs. Most of the interviews were held at my place or at the interviewees' workplaces. The average duration of interviews was one hour and fifteen minutes.

As mentioned before, in the first place I organized interviews with young fathers as they were easier to recruit. My first interview went quite well, although I was a bit nervous, but I considered that to be normal. After every interview I was finding something new and always refining my interview guide. This enabled me to get comprehensive data materials. In addition to this, conducting interviews with young fathers was quite easy. They were more open, talked more and it was easier to communicate with them. Interviews with elder fathers were more stressful; they talked less and were more serious. However, in contrast to young fathers, they did not try to show off and I felt that they were more sincere when talking. So, both generations had their pros and cons.

When I started interviewing the elder generation of fathers and overviewed results, I became a bit worried. I think it was because I expected something different, and sincerely believed those two groups to have a clear border of differences between each other. But while conducting the interviews I realized that I was wrong, and things were much more complex than just the generational difference. In addition, although my research topic was not sensitive, it was still

emotionally difficult for me to listen to some of the fathers, especially to the elder ones. Listening to elder fathers narratives, I realized how hard it is to live in a country where economic situation is so tough and at the same time being obliged be economically strong to be considered (or to consider themselves) as good fathers. Paying attention to those things during of my research was however very useful in terms of reflexivity which I will discuss below.

As explained above, my initial plan was to conduct two FGDs with mothers. However, considering that most of the people left the capital for holidays there was a significant scarcity of candidates at the time of my research. Another fundamental reason was that I was unable to find one special time in the week that would be suitable for all of them. Thus, in the end I decided to meet them one by one and engage in conversations.

All in all, I did eight interviews with mothers. Some of them were divorced, others were living together with their spouse, but all of them had at least one child of five years old and experience of living with the child's father. Because I could meet them at any time and place they wished, they agreed with ease. The average duration of each interview was 30 minutes. The venue of an interview in most cases was their working place or home.

4.5 Focus Group Discussions and Observations

According to Vaughn and Colleagues (1996) the goal of the Focus Group Discussions is to explore norms, attitudes and general ideas about the selected topic (Vaughn and Colleagues 1996 in Puchta and Potter 2004, P. 6). My purpose of conducting focus groups was to explore youth's ideas about fatherhood. Thus, I conducted two FGDs with young people.

Both FGDs were held at my place. It was a quite comfortable environment for organizing focus groups. Sweets and drinks were served and participants also brought some of the snacks and drinks, like juice or chocolate for example. Both groups were mixed in terms of gender. The age of participants ranged from 20 to 26. Duration of each FGD was approximately two hours and 30 minutes, with one fifteen minute break in between. Both focus groups consisted of six people.

The discussions went well, although some people seem to be less active in terms of expressing their opinion. In such situations, I tried to engage them by asking about their opinion.

Otherwise, during the whole discussions I was playing the role of a facilitator. However, at some points discussions became so emotional that it was hard for me to keep my opinions to myself and remain neutral.

All in all, both focus groups were very successful. All of the participants were quite open and willing to talk. In the end, I wanted some feedback from them about the process of our FGDs. According to them, they enjoyed the experience a lot and found it very interesting. Therefore, I am very satisfied with my focus groups, and I consider that I acquired necessary data through them.

While being in Tbilisi during the three months of fieldwork, I also observed father – child interactions in the streets, public transports, parks or in swimming pools. Unlike Norway, where I from the first day of my arrival saw fathers with baby strollers in the streets and public transports, I was unable to observe the same behavior in Tbilisi. However, while spending time in the parks of Tbilisi, I have observed many men coming with their families (wife and children), resting and enjoying nature with them, especially on weekends.

4.6 Challenges met, Reflexivity and Research Ethics

One of the biggest challenges while being in the field was that the research was conducted during summer. This was problematic, firstly because it was very hot and sometimes impossible to go out, and secondly, as I mentioned above, a lot of people were out of town which made it difficult for me to find potential study participants.

Another challenge came in form of focus groups of mothers, which I was unable to organize. It was fine for them to give an interview if I could visit. However, they were not eager to make an effort and come to the particular place on specific time. Although, I am quite aware of the limited amount of time employed women have, as they have to combine domestic and work lives. As a result, I did interviews instead of FGDs.

Recruitment of fathers from the young generation was also a challenge. The most logical way to search for study participants for the first generation was to ask my friends' fathers. They often apologized though that their fathers were not willing to participate, or they do not have time. However, in the end, I was able to acquire all eight interviews from the old generation of fathers.

All my informants were told in advance about ethical issues of my research. I thoroughly explained about the confidentiality and anonymity of the study and made sure they understood it. Because the topic was not sensitive they did not seem to be much concerned about the confidentiality issue. They believed they had nothing to hide when talking about their parental experiences. Moreover, they often said their full names while being taped, even though they were aware that it was not necessary. I also explained what will happen to the data material after I will go back to Norway and provided relevant information about it. I explained that their recordings will not be used anywhere, but I was going to transcribe them. Additionally, they often asked if they could see the final results of my research and if I could send it to them. Thus, after finishing my Master thesis, I am going to send it to all of my study participants that I will be able to reach. In addition to this, my study participants never asked for money or for other kind of reward for the participation in my research. I did not even have the feeling that they expected anything from me.

Being Georgian and speaking the same language made me an “insider” in general for all of my study participants. In addition to this, for young people and mothers, my gender and age was also an advantage. However, in case of men, my gender was more of an issue.

In case of some young fathers, I felt that they tried to make an impression on me (mainly by boasting how good husbands and fathers they were). For the elder generation, I felt that they considered me unexperienced compared to themselves, as they often kept giving me advice and life lessons.

Considering the fact, that I do not have a close relationship with my father, or put in other way, we are not on the best of terms, it was not surprising that I had some previous generalized thoughts about fatherhood. To be more specific, I didn't expect that men would know their children so well. Most importantly, it was surprising for me, when I saw these men being so emotional when talking about their children. In addition to this, I supposed that New Fatherhood wouldn't be a common practice among Georgian fathers. However, this was not a limitation for me as I was quite aware of my predisposed perceptions on Georgian fathers' practices. It is also worth noting that my biases about fatherhood quickly faded away after I stepped into the researcher's role. After starting my research, I came to the conclusion that there is no “good” or “bad” fatherhood. I could see that whether a given father was more involved or less involved, they all had their arguments and reasons for practicing fatherhood

the way they were doing it. Thus, it is my goal as a researcher to explore their perceptions and attitudes and discuss it within relevant conceptual frameworks.

4.7 Data Analysis

The material collected during the fieldwork was diverse and compound, requiring detailed and careful analysis. As mentioned above, all of the interviews and FGDs were taped with a voice recorder. As many of the interviews were conducted in cafes or other social gathering places, the external sounds and noises were present in most of the recordings. However, because I had a very high-quality professional voice recorder, peripheral sounds did not cause additional challenges for me in the process of data analysis. Besides, during the fieldwork I often revised my material to ensure the accuracy and clarity of the data. After transcribing my data into my native language, in Georgian, I began the data analysis. After evaluation of my material, emerging themes were outlined and grouped. In the end, I had all my interviews and FGDs transcribed in English. In addition to this, I kept my data during the whole process of writing, which enabled me to always go back to them in case of any unclarity. My field notes were also useful during the data analysis processes.

CHAPTER 5

UNDERSTANDING FATHERHOOD – PERCEPTIONS, PRACTICES, AND JOYS AND WORRIES

5.1 Introduction

The existing literature indicates that in Georgia, gender norms are strongly entrenched and highly valued (see literature review and introduction). Many Georgian studies have demonstrated Georgian fathers limited participation in child care and domestic work. However, these studies hardly give an insight on fathers' explanations for doing so. Georgian fathers, however, are not the only ones who demonstrate limited involvement in care giving activities. As argued by Lamb (2010), fathers in most parts of the world are generally less occupied by family work; the vast majority of tasks in a household, including child care, are undertaken by the woman, regardless of her employment status. That is, women are doing gender by undertaking the domestic work while men's gender display is completed in terms of breadwinning (West and Zimmerman 1987). For most of my study participants, being a breadwinner was the most common and desirable way of being a father; successful provider role often meant the fulfillment of their gender roles for Georgian fathers. Ridgeway and Correll (2004) state that, "gender background" is always present in every social role we perform. Thus, one's gender identity influences how she or he behaves in his/her social role. My findings illustrate that Georgian men, in the roles of the fathers indeed demonstrated the influence of masculine identity on their parenting practices; which this chapter intends to present.

The chapter introduces different aspects of fatherhood practices. In particular, the discussions in this chapter will illustrate my participants' ideas about good fatherhood, father's roles and responsibilities, and emotional aspects of fathering. Considering that fatherhood is a social construction (Doherty, Kouneski, Erickson, 1996) it can't be discussed separately from the social norms and cultural features in a given society. As mentioned in the introduction, patriarchal beliefs are firmly entrenched in Georgian society, where the hierarchy between men and women is displayed in different social set up. One of the settings, where the hierarchy between a male and a female is practiced, is family; and as already noted in the introduction, the concept of the family carries a significant value in the Georgian society.

Traditionally, in Georgia, when creating a new family the wife is often brought to a man's home, usually in his parent's house. This cultural habit is even expressed in a Georgian language. Specifically, in Georgian, the term of "becoming married" is expressed differently for male and female. Particularly, for the men we say "colis mokvana" (ცოლის მოყვანა) – which directly means to bring the wife in and for the girls "gatkoveba" (გათხოვება) – directly translated as to lend out, to get/go married. This linguistic feature is expressed in social norms as well. In Georgia, the concept of the family doesn't necessarily imply cohabitation of two people; it often includes grandparents too. Newly married couples who lack financial resources often settle down in the husband's parents' apartment. Such cohabitation often leads to the uneven distribution of household labor between spouses where parents undertake a big amount of household activities together with the mother. The experience of living with the parents was often brought up by my study participants and especially by the elder fathers. They often recognized that their lack of involvement in household activities was due to the presence of their own mothers, who played a crucial role in child upbringing and helping their wives.

To put it briefly, in Georgian society it's quite common to live in extended households. Such household arrangement often led to a drop out of men from the housekeeping labor, as men did not see the need for involvement. As mentioned above, this reason was often highlighted by my study participants while explaining the causes for their passive involvement. The issue of labor division and household task distribution within the family will be further discussed in the following section of this chapter. In addition, the chapter presents fathers' personal experiences with their parents; while doing so, the correlations between their fathering attitudes and experiences will be established and discussed.

5.2 Being a Good Father: Roles and Responsibilities

Lamb (1987) identifies three forms of involvement in child raising: *availability*, *interaction*, and *responsibility*. These different levels of fathering, I found to be relevant in the case of my study participants, especially when discussing father's roles in two generations. As stated in the literature review, the quantity of spent time, is not always in correlation with the quality of communications. In particular, one may demonstrate a low level of practical engagement, but at the same time can be a very responsible parent (Marsiglio, Day & Lamb 2000). Such aspects of parenting practices appear to be true in the case of my participants. Fathers who expressed

less interaction with their children reported a high level of responsibility and availability in case of need. While others, who were available for a less amount of time, explained that such a short period was enough for them to interact with children and give the best of attention and care they could.

“I think that it is not necessary to spend much time with someone, but, what's important is the quality of time spent together and how productive it will be.” (Young father).

“Maybe I should have spent more time with my children. I had busy working hours, but they always knew I was always there for them, after all I worked to support and secure them” (elder father).

Accordingly, answers differed in terms of what each father considered to be the most important in child upbringing and the best practices for their children. In the following sections, I will discuss father's opinions about their roles. It will be debated in terms of breadwinning, household labor, and child care activities.

5.2.1 Breadwinning

According to UNDP report (2013), in Georgia, 86% of the urban and 90% of the rural population agrees that breadwinning is men's primary duty. While women's main responsibility appears to be taking care of household and child care (ibid). The importance of breadwinning is not only the case of Georgian society. Researches around the world have demonstrated, that men still continue to spend the majority of their time on economic contribution to the family. For example, Kay's (2006) study on Russian father's perspective also displays centrality of the breadwinning in fathers' world. The importance of breadwinning is not only reported by fathers' themselves. According to White's (1994) empirical findings, interviewees stressed that their own fathers were minimally involved in their lives while being too busy with breadwinning. Thus, for the better understanding of Georgian fathers' perspective on their responsibilities, we will look into their narratives and explore their opinions.

All of the fathers were asked what they considered to be a “good father”. Men would usually answer simply with the words “*must care for their children*”; but it was unclear what they meant by the word “care”. Thus when asking again, they started to list a number of activities and responsibilities a good father must undertake. In all cases, breadwinning appeared to be

number one of basic responsibility. Almost all of the interviewees considered “financial support” or “provider” to be their primary duty. Fathers never stated the importance of securing healthy food, having enough clothes or even being healthy. They were more concerned with long term plans of the individual child’s development. Moreover, while speaking about their involvement in child care they often brought their breadwinning roles as the excuse for their passive involvement in their children lives. One of the elder men expressed it like this:

“First of all, the good father should be a financial provider; he should have a good job and to do so, the state’s support is crucial to have a stable job to have a monthly salary. It is not only enough to hug and play with your children; attention is very important too. Also, the father should consider some of the child’s wishes, not all of them of course, but at least some of them.”

Another man from young generation explained:

“I think my main responsibility is to ensure that my children will have a good living conditions in the future; I am almost done with apartments for all of them. I should provide financial support for them. I try to take care of their physical development [sport]. Also, they will do something wrong I should give them proper remark, but in a way that they don’t get upset. Moreover, I never have beaten any of my children..”

These two men from both generations displayed a high level of *responsibility* (see above) and low level of *availability* and *interaction*. They viewed their primary role in terms of breadwinning and in providing secure future for their children. While these men stated the importance of financial provider directly, others expressed it indirectly, by the highlighting significance of the children’s needs.

“The child should not feel that he or she lacks anything, I want them to know that I will do anything for them. I don’t want them to see me as a poor man who can’t do anything.”

From the latter case one can see that being a financial provider serves not only as the goal to support family and allow economic stability, but it is also one way to feel more confident and fulfilled in their roles. Furthermore, fathers not only considered breadwinning to be their main responsibility, but also expressed a feeling that it was something that was required from them by society to be recognized as a good fathers. As noted in the literature review, gender is an important aspect influencing paternal behavior. Socially created gender stereotypes influence how men are seen and treated as fathers, as well as how fathers themselves perceive their paternal roles and duties (Marsiglio, 1998). One of my interviewees, who was 38 years old and

represented the younger generation, expressed that, breadwinning is not only required by the society, but women also expect such roles from men. He said:

“Women wouldn’t want a man who is involved in household activities, on the contrary, they want a financially stable husband who can support the family.”

Thus, participants were well aware of socially constructed parenting duties. When asked about criterias of a good father, they often stated that they knew they were not as good fathers as ought to be. To be more specific, they often highlighted that social requirements are different, but for them other things are more important. For instance, one of young father said:

“There are two categories of fathers. The first one is what society considers to be good fathering and it is what everyone asks me to do: to take the child for a walk, to buy something for them, to teach something etc.. But on the other hand I think the best father is the one who gives the child an opportunity to develop his or her personality and to have a freedom to be independent, so that he feels responsible for his actions and realizes that everything depends on him. After doing so, he will not be dependent on others. “

Furthermore, some fathers even stated that if they would only play and devote all the time to their children and their fundamental role will not be breadwinning, they will be judged as bad fathers. As discussed in the literature review and theory chapter, notions of hegemonic masculinity exist in the society, which stresses father’s breadwinning roles. These contradictions create tensions between practices, desires and social norms (Magaraggia 2012). Thus, fathers’ who might be willing to express their paternal contribution in other way than breadwinning, may not always do it, even in case of having the desire, since they are often aware of potential social judgments. To put it simply, they are practicing what they are expected to. One of the young father explains it like this:

“What do you think, which one is the good father, the one who does not interact with his children, but buys a good house, pays for the education, sends them to study abroad etc; or the one who doesn’t have as much money, can’t provide basic financial needs for education, to buy a house,.. But, has a warm relationship with children. So, the latter father would be considered as the bad one, while the first one will be regarded as the good one.”

However, particularly this father at the same time was the one who stated that he doesn’t spend that much time with his children. Nonetheless, as expressed by him, his children loved him a

lot; he considered himself to be a person who knows how to interact with children, what they want and how to speak with them in their language.

When discussing breadwinning roles of men and particularly of a father, it is important to highlight the economic situation of the country they live. According to World Bank statistics 2010-2014, in Georgia, unemployment remains the most significant public policy challenge. Thus, being a breadwinner in such an economically weak country is very stressful as mentioned by my study participants. They often expressed that they have a fear of “tomorrow” and are afraid not to lose their jobs. When asked about their regular day in the family, this is what one of the elder fathers replied:

“Very stressful, since we are in Georgia. I can hardly remember a very happy day (laughs). I usually wake up very early, I check internet news, sometimes watch TV, and then I go to work, after work I come home, and I see my children.” (Elder father, 41 years old).

“I was working in several places, it was 1990, so very hard period. I did not have a stable job, my wife was not working, in fact, she is still unemployed. Thus, I used to go out very early and come back very late. So, I was the sole financial provider. In such circumstances, it's not surprising that I didn't have time for my children.” (Elder father, 50 years old)

The majority of the men I interviewed can be placed in “The career position” (Halrynjo, 2009). According to Halrynjo (2009), men in this category earn more than their partners, and hardly contribute anything to domestic and care work. They usually are dissatisfied with their working hours and leisure time. They want to have more free time but consider it impossible in this position. Expressions of “struggling for financial stability” was not a rare case in my data. Participants often recalled the periods when they were unemployed and how they “almost got mad”. Thus, being a good father, in terms of breadwinning is something that is connected to the economic development of the country. Fathers, trying to fulfill their parental duties, often experienced excessive stress and fear, concerning their economic conditions and employment. Most of my research participants were aware that breadwinning is their responsibility, which is required from them by the society. One put it in this way: “a man involved in child care and walking with a baby stroller is not appreciated in our society”.

5.2.2 Household Labor

As mentioned in the introduction, Georgia is quite a patriarchal country, where men and women have different roles and responsibilities. Therefore, they contribute to different things in terms of household and child development. As illustrated by the relevant studies, in the Georgian context, women's self-realization is to a large extent expected to unfold in the private sphere (see introduction and lit. review). Since it is deemed to be the responsibility of women, men usually don't feel obliged to participate in household labor and child care. According to the National Statistics Office of Georgia women's employment rate in 2012, was 49 %; while men's was 66 %. This, on the other hand, in many cases creates a double burden for employed women, as they have to cope with paid work and the family duties at the same time (see literature review). The opinions of women will be discussed in the chapter seven, while here I will present father's attitudes towards the division of the labor and difference between mother's and father's contribution to child development.

According to the narratives of the fathers, child care and household activities were mainly done by their wives. However, they also mentioned that in case of possibilities or need, they also helped their spouses. Father's activities were limited to grocery shopping, holding the child while the mother was cooking, helping in giving the bath and in some cases helping with the school lessons and driving children to school. One man even mentioned that he helps his wife with cooking when it comes to cutting the onions. As already been mentioned, such division of duties, according to men, was due to their daily schedules and busy working hours.

When discussing this particular topic, some of the men replied that they would gladly participate in household activities but they don't have relevant skills for it. However, others simply expressed that it is a duty of a woman.

"I think that it is quite clear that women should prepare food. Ok, so let's discuss the situation where the woman cooks food and takes care of children till 5 o'clock and then husband comes and he helps with children. And another scenario where man prepares food, takes care of children and then the mother comes exhausted and rests; which one is more acceptable to you?"
" (young father)

This example illustrates that, because some tasks are deemed as "feminine" and "masculine" undertaking feminine tasks were often seen as unnatural and thus, not masculine. For the abovementioned father to help the wife is acceptable, but to undertake domestic task independently is shameful according to existing social norms. Some of the elder fathers used

to highlight that times and rules have changed. They often mentioned that nowadays there are more men sitting at homes and being unemployed than women. Also, they emphasized the “institution” of nannies, which according to them was not popular at their young age. Some of the fathers gave examples of technological progress in terms of washing machines and fast food technologies. One of the fathers even joked “*nowadays the time has changed so much that man can easily survive without woman*”.

For some young fathers, household labor division was connected to a man’s and woman’s “natural”, inborn differences. Specifically, they believed that because male and female have different abilities, they should do what they are good at. This is how one of the young fathers formulated his opinion:

“Despite the fact that men are good cooks, they are born to be the leading force of the family and decision makers. Men are more rational compared to women; women can’t assess risk as much as men can do. I think that when it comes to household tasks 95 % should be different, and 5 % shared.”

The majority of men replied in the same pattern as the given examples show. However, there were some men in elder generations, who said that they cook for themselves and clean after themselves as well. Although, those men also added that they had experience of living alone and it is quite normal for them to cook for themselves. Some others indicated that they participate in cooking when it comes to preparing special foods, requiring more physical strength.² One father from the elder generation also expressed his ideas about natural roles of men and women:

“It is not something created by Georgians; it came from an early stage of human life when a mother cared about children and father was a financial provider. The circumstances have pushed it in this way. Of course times change, roles are changing and women’s duties as well. But I think what is natural it’s better. However, the wife should not feel oppressed in the family, so if the mother is satisfied with her roles then all well and good.”

As it becomes clear from the above mentioned citations, in terms of household division of labor, opinions were very similar in both generations. As argued by one of the young fathers, the reason for this might be that young fathers were still raised in a very patriarchal family

² *In particular, specific Georgian meals which are made of meat, where one needs to cut the meat and bones.*

where all the tasks for the child were done by his mother. According to the social cognitive theory on gender identity development, parents play a significant role in shaping one's gender identity, as children learn and "model" gendered behavior through different circumstances (Bussey, 2011). A boy raised in such a family often receives the examples of household labor division. According to UNDP study report (2013) a big percentage of Georgian girls (82%-92%) were encouraged to learn and practice "woman's work" in households; respectively men were encouraged to practice man's job. For example, one of the young fathers shared his experience:

"In my case I was raised in a way that I considered it to be woman's task. My mother was doing same, and maybe it is one of the reasons that I consider that woman should do all the domestic work" (young father).

Another young father, also recognizes the helping hand of a mother and explains reason for his lack of involvement in household labor:

"I do not have time to cook or clean and, frankly speaking, I don't see the need for it. I mean, of course if my wife would need I will always be there, but my mother lives with us. When there are two women in the house, there is nothing left to do". (Young father)

The especially interesting case belongs to one of the fathers, which I want to introduce.

He is 38 years father, having three children. He is married and divorced two times and currently is single. He has three kids, the first girl from the first marriage is 20 years old, and she currently lives in Canada with her mother. From the second marriage, he has two children – a 15-year-old girl and a ten years old boy; he divorced his second wife as well. The children were living with their mother. However, after some time his second ex-wife suddenly has disappeared. Thus, children moved to live with him. At the time of the interview, he was living with his two children and his mother. When asked why the mother was living with them, he replied that she helps him a lot and also he doesn't want her to live alone.

When he started narrating his family story, I expected that he would be very involved in household activities, busy with caring for their children as much as he could. From his narratives, it was quite clear that he loved his children and children loved him back. He told that they often go for vacations together, and they talk a lot. However, surprisingly for me he said that he never prepares meals for the children, not even for himself. Then I asked if he participated in children's school life and his reply was that, because his mother was a teacher,

it was mainly undertaken by her. Moreover, he was quite sincere to say that he can't even iron his shirt.

“I don't know how to cook, I don't even know how to fry an egg. I don't know what will happen to me if I will live alone. Now my mother helps me in such things. I don't even want to imagine that something happens to her”.

Based on give examples, it seems to be a common pattern that men at a young age while living together with their mother, the latter does all the task for her son. When moving separately, those roles are replaced by the wife, who is raised and prepared to undertake all the household chores. Moreover, it seems that wives usually don't express any significant desire to get help from their husbands and in most cases are satisfied with existing distribution of the family duties. Consequently, if a man doesn't have experience of living alone, as do some of my participants, it is unlikely that they will share household tasks with their spouses.

5.2.3 Involvement in Childcare

As discussed in the literature review chapter, studies on Georgian men's participation in childcare indicate the very limited level of participation. The researches, examining men's involvement in childcare mainly don't state men's standpoint and reasons for such limited engagement. Thus, below men's opinions about child care participation and their practical engagement will be presented.

It is worth noting that, all of the fathers I have interviewed had full-time jobs. This means that they all had quite busy schedules, being the whole day at work, and as mentioned by some of the participants, even on weekends. In such circumstances, they were left with the very limited amount of time to spend with their families. Also, when it comes to wife's employment status, it was different between two generations. Mainly, the spouses of the elder men were unemployed. The given reasons for this varied. In some cases, it was said to be the choice of the mother, while in other instances it was explained by the economy.

“20 years ago, when Soviet Union had collapsed it was hard to find a job even for me. Thus, it is not unexpected that she could not find a job after five years of unemployment; even though she has two Diplomas” – elder father explained. However, in contrast to elder fathers, the wives of the majority of younger fathers were employed.

Regarding practical issues of involvement, my questions mainly referred to their participation in child care, including changing diapers, preparing meals for a child, giving the bath, reading, helping with homework, etc. Mostly, participants said that their involvement was not big in terms of child care and reasons for this were varying. The most common claim was an issue of time and long working hours. Others were explaining that they did not find the need for their involvement as the wife was not working and thus the latter was doing all the domestic work. However, all of the interviewees agreed that if their wife would need the help they would definitely support her. They recognized their lack of practical involvement in childcare but reported readiness to help their partners. One of the younger men explained:

“I have never changed a diaper and I don’t even know how to do it. However, I have participated in other things more or less. I was working in the period when our child was still small, but even if I had not been working it would probably be the same. But of course, if there is no one around and mother is busy I will do it, and we had such cases; what I am saying is that it is not happening very often that I am doing child care tasks.”

As for the elder fathers, it was hard for them to recall the memories of involvement in child care and different tasks they had been doing. Some of them said that they were helping the wife and participated in child care. Mostly, they also complained about a busy schedule and hard economic situation in the country. However, although they did not recall direct memories of child care, they explained how they contributed to the family’s everyday needs:

“As for the school and homework, when my sons were preparing for the exams for entering the university, I was the one who was preparing them in five or four subjects. When it comes to grocery shopping, children help their mother and sometimes I do it as well.” (Elder father)

“If there is no other option the father should participate in child care activities. I mean that if the mother does not have enough time, or is sick or just can’t do it, of course, the father should do it. But I remember, I was taking the children for a walk, helping my wife when giving the bath or sometimes taking them to bed. I mean, historically its woman’s duties to do all the fundamental caregiving tasks”. (Elder father)

Child care activities include a lot of different tasks. Relying on father’s accounts, it was clear that they were not doing all of them. However, they were undertaking some of the activities. For instance, some of them often highlighted that when a child is small, giving the bath is very difficult and they often helped their wives. While others used to say that, when the child was small, they were waking up more often during the nights than wives, to care for their infants.

Thus, they did participate to some extent if they could see the need to do so. This is illustrated well by the quotations of young father:

“When we had first child I was helping a lot since my wife was very sick after giving the birth. She could hardly walk. Therefore, I was always waking up during the night if the child was crying and delivered the necessary care. But, for the second child I was not as involved as previously, as my wife was feeling well and she was doing it”.

When doing interviews and asking about child care involvement one particular notion drew my attention which was very common in all the narratives. Doing child care activities was not always understood as a parental duty by fathers, but they viewed it as the help of the wife. And since participation in child care is not the attribution of a “good father”, fathers in case of doing so, highlighted that they are doing it because it is their duty as a husband. Recalling from my literature review, Marsiglio et.al (2000) states *emotional, practical, and psychosocial support of female partners* as one of the paternal influences, which as we see often appeared true in case of my study participants. They often highlighted this in the discussions with the words “if the wife needs help”, “I saw she could not do it”. On the other hand, it is clear that women not always asked husbands to help in child care duties unless it was necessary. This pattern was even mentioned by some of my interviewees:

“I was not doing so much. Maybe because of my wife. When we had first child she wanted to do everything, I couldn’t find need of me. Moreover, I have felt that she has changed a lot and I started to lack attention.” (Young father)

“At first I was afraid not to hurt my child, I did not know how to hold him; my wife, she was doing everything. And also, my wife’s mother was always with them and helping with everything” (elder father).

From the narratives, we can see that fathers’ involvement in childcare doesn’t correspond with the notions of “New fatherhood”, mostly because they don’t consider child care and domestic labor to be the priority and their primary duty.

5.3 Joys and Worries

“I am not an emotional person. I don’t express much of emotions neither in bad nor in good times. But when I first time held my first child I could not keep my emotions. I started crying”.

(Young father)

From the discussions above, one can see that fathers did not show much of involvement in practical duties. However, despite the lack of time and their passive involvement in everyday lives of their children, it was astonishing for me how well they knew their children, their features and characters. All men I have interviewed were willing to share with me uniqueness of their children; they were describing the character and habits of each child. They also shared different methods they have used to handle or to spend time with them. Two narratives of young fathers illustrate this point:

“You can’t say what correct upbringing is. Every child needs specific approach. For example, my first child used to wake during the night and you could just carry him and it was enough for him to go to sleep. Whilst, for the second child I needed the whole concert at home to make him stop crying. Every child is an individual from birth” (young father)

“The smaller looks like me with character a lot, very alive and funny, I am crazy about him. The middle is more serious, if he likes doing something, he does it with an entire heart. He likes football, hockey, loves sport a lot, knows surnames of players and everyone says that I love him in a very special way. For the girl we don’t have that active communications as with the boys for example, but I make her every wish come true and of course I love her also, but for example I carry boys with me in the restaurant with friends, but not the girl” (young father)

Fathers were very concerned about their children’s education plans, future paths and about their independence among others. Many men were emotional when speaking of some of the hard times they had experienced during the upbringing of their children, basically connected to their education. Alternatively, recalling the moments when they were proud of them:

“It often happened that I was often proud of him [his youngest child; by that time 26 years old]. When suddenly he was achieving something I did not expect, especially when he was studying abroad, and he expressed his position that he did not care about anything but still managed to achieve some success.” (Elder father).

“I remember that my daughter became the winner of the math contest. I was very happy and proud of her, perhaps this is the most memorable memory”. (Elder father)

As mentioned already, education was a quite significant issue for most of the elder fathers as illustrated by the examples below:

“Our goal was to give good education to our son, we brought him in a good school, and it was quite good considering our financial situation, but he still had some difficulties with studying. I was trying to help hi, in every way I could, but he could hardly finish the school. Then he expressed his interest in singing and dance, but he left both of them soon. Then I suggested him another sports activity but he also dropped it. I did not know how to deal with him. In the beginning, I was pushing him for studying but then I was trying to make him more independent. Now he relies on me a lot, and I want him to be more autonomous. I did my best to be next to him, I was not ideal, but I did my best...” (Elder father)

One oldest participant was also very concerned about his children’s education and future. In his narratives, he recalls memories of the discussions with his children about their education:

“I told to my children, if you don’t want then don’t study. The world needs cleaners and waitresses also.”(Elder father)

In case of sons, fathers often wanted for them to do sport. One of the father for example, worries about his son’s sports career opportunities:

“They never had problems with studies, but we have problems with football. In Georgia, there is a problem with sport development. No one cares about sport and there is a corruption. If you pay money they can engage child in a team, if not - child stays outside; it does not matter how talented is a player. He is very talented in football, but we can do nothing.” (Elder father).

When speaking about the emotions, one of the marked difference between generations was that they were sensitive to different issues. Younger fathers mainly expressed many emotions about having their first child. They often stated that had curiosity about the looks of their child. They highlighted that they wanted him/her to be like them.

“Having the child is connected with great curiosity, because a parent is always concerned what his child will look like, what kind of eyes, hair he will have. Especially when husband and wife are different in terms of appearance. For example, my wife has green eyes, and first child was

with green eyes and blonde hair and he was very different from me. I was expecting the second one to be like me and I became very glad when I saw him as he looked like me. “(Young father).

Young fathers were also worried about their children’s career plans. The ones who were over 30 often expressed fear that they might not have an opportunity to create as bright future for their children as they wished to. They often highlighted job market’s instability. However, unlike elder fathers, young fathers were more concerned about their children’s social status in terms of self-expression, especially if their child was a boy. One of the younger father said:

“I will understand my children in everything. Even, for example, you know I have a daughter and even if she will have sexual relationship before marriage, I will understand it, but I can kill the other one if he will do something wrong with my daughter. However, if my son will walk with earrings or with long hair, you know I will be very ironic about it, and I will laugh at him. I will try to let him know why it is funny, for example why should he do so? ...I will try to be interested why he wants to look like that, why should a man do it? (Loughs). You know there is joke, that son with earings walks to the father and father says: “Son, earrings were worn by pirates or gays and you don’t look like you arrived with a ship” (loughs).

Generally speaking, fathers from both generations wished that their child became independent. When speaking about children’s education, elder fathers often explained that they try to educate them as they knew how hard it is surviving without education. One of the elder men even stated *“it is hard for me with so many Diplomas to find a proper job and imagine what he can do without education.”* Younger fathers were also very concerned about the independence of their children. They tried to bring up their children in a way that, they get used to independence, without feeling that everything is delivered for free to them. For instance, a young father recalls one situation with his young son:

“For example, there was a case when my younger child could not put on shoes and he wanted me to help him, he was crying and all but I did not help him on purpose. I think he has all the capabilities, mental and physical, to put on a shoe by himself, but he thinks that asking and crying is easier than to do it himself. I think that before 7-8 years old child can learn so much that he could stay at home alone and get the food from the fridge and eat. I consider it quite normal for that age. An attentive parent would help with putting a shoe on or will do it for him, but I will not do it because he must know it. “

One of the young fathers, who has been recently divorced, expressed his fear about the possibility that his ex-wife would get married and his daughter will be raised by another man.

“I know that my wife will give anything to our daughter but I am still afraid. I often think what would happen if my wife gets married. Of course, I will always be there for my daughter, but new husband of my ex-wife might spend more time with her than me. And maybe he will not treat her in a way she deserves it? Or imagine that they will have another kid and of course he will love his kid more than my daughter and it will be very stressful for her. I often think about it.”

When asking to my study participants if they considered themselves to be good fathers, the young ones were mainly more confident. They were not saying directly that they are good fathers, but they would say that their children love them, or they try their best. However, some of them directly replied that they considered themselves to be good fathers. Elder men were more careful and modest in their answers. Even if they would give a positive response, they would add that they think like this, because of their children, as they have become strong individuals and good persons.

“Probably I am not a good father, and generally saying a person should not consider himself perfect; I am not bad, but not perfect. If I say I am a good father, I should say that I did everything they needed. But there were kind of stripes; at some point I was good at some point bad, but I was not good in all case. Overall, I consider I was not a bad father. I don't know, I don't have an answer to that question.” (Older father)

In addition to this, no matter how good fathers they perceived themselves to be, almost all of them, in both generations had regrets in relation to their children or the family. In many cases, they regretted having little time for them. Occasionally they regretted some of the attitudes they had towards their children, or lack of financial stability to support them in every way. Fathers of both generations were very emotional when talking about their experiences with their children. However, they expressed themselves in a different ways. Young fathers were emotional about having the first child and talked expressively about their expectations before the child was born. While elder ones were more worried about the future of their children, the paths they have chosen and will choose in the future. However, it can be argued that given generational difference is linked to the child's age. Also, elder fathers were more concerned about their kids education or sports career due to the country's economic instability. In other words, because of their own tough experience in the labor market to fulfill their breadwinning roles, they didn't wish the same struggle for their children.

5.4 Is Fatherhood learned?

Among my study participants some told that they were strict to their children, some of them were very friendly, while others preferred to have a distance and be an authority. A few of them did child care and household labor, while most remained only as financial providers. All of them, however, had their reasons for being or doing so. It's clear that they all were trying to be the best fathers they could be, but still, where did they learn how to be a parent? Do their values come from their own parents? Or maybe they wanted to be the fathers they lacked? Considering fathers' accounts, it was clear that they were influenced by their parents' behavior and approaches towards them. In the most cases, fathers talked about their fathers as a great support and hope. Those who talked in this manner tried to be the same point of reference for their children:

“My father was my friend and at the same time he was my hope. Father is always giving the hope to a child. I try to be as attentive as my father. I lacked my dad's presence because he died at an early age. Now I try to give enough attention to my children“. (Elder father)

Other interviewees also pointed to similarities between their parenting experience and their fathers' parenting approach:

“My dad also paid attention to the same things while raising me as I do, but in a more strict way, so there is an influence.“ (Young father)

“Yes, I think he had an influence, my father is very friendly towards me, and I want to be in the same way with my son.“ (Young father)

Participants recognizing the good traits of their parents, also highlighted that they are not as good parents as their fathers. It also seems that interviewees, whose fathers were warm towards them, were remembered with greater warmth by them, than the ones who were strict and did not have close relationships with their children. For example, this young father, talks about how much he loves his dad, highlighting how caring he was:

“My children will never love me as I loved my father, because my father was very caring. Of course I am also warm towards my children; but with my dad I always had a feeling that he was there for me, even more than my mother and I have this feeling even today. My mother is

more like me; in extreme situations she is very active and of course she cares about me, she fed me and everything but after the birth of my sister I lacked attention from her. Also my mom was working and, therefore, was busy. That is why I have learned to cook for myself at an early age. Also I used to go out when I was five, while my children still don't have this freedom. My father was more like what people demand from me. He always had desire to spend time with me". (Young father)

As mentioned earlier, not all the participants remembered good sides of their parents. Moreover, in a several cases interviewees were expressing their sadness for lacking some things they thought to be important. For example, this elder father narrates:

"I had a difficult relationship with my father. He was a director of the school, and I was under constant fear not to have bad marks, which was stressful. When you study a lot and parents put pressure on you, you don't really socialize with friends. I don't want to make this mistake with my children. It's very hard when you don't have a childhood; there is an opposite sex, friends, where you can be happier than when receiving good grades. Of course, it's important to succeed in life, but happiness does not lie in good marks". (Elder father)

In fact, not only him, but several other participants expressed their fathers' strict attitude towards the education and towards them too. Considering their experience and their parenting practices, the ones who had a strict father, chose to be friendlier and warmer parent. This point of view is expressed in the narratives of one of the younger fathers:

"My father is a very strict man, not only towards his children, but towards people in general. If my father doesn't like something, he would say it straightforward. But if I don't like something I would not say it directly. So my father is the opposite. He is also an introvert, while I am not like that. Maybe I am the anti version of my father in a way that, although my parents love each other, he is very strict towards my mother, but I am not so strict towards my wife at all. Maybe it's a kind of compensation, that I was seeing that strict attitude and did not want to be the same with my wife. My father gives me remarks from time to time when he sees my approach towards my children, saying that I should be stricter. Sometimes even I think I am soft, as I see that my friends have more patriarchal relationships in their families. I see that the border that we had with my father, doesn't exist between me and my daughter, and sometimes my wife also complains about it". (Young father)

Another young father also highlights his father's strictness and radical approaches, pointing that he doesn't wish to raise his children in the same way:

“I will not raise my children the way my father raised us, he was way too radical, he wanted everything to be the way he wanted them”. (Young father)

As discussed in the theory chapter, social cognitive theory on identity development names “modeling” as the one way of learning gender identity. It highlights that people don’t simply resemble their models, but they observe and reflect on their behavior (Bussey 2011). From the narratives of my study participants about their fathers, the influence of their parents was always present in their parenting practices. Some of the fathers reported that they have a similar approach towards their children as their dads had towards them. Others, however, who lacked warmth and friendly relationship expressed the opposite; in the case of having strict fathers, they usually were warmer and friendlier dads towards their children. However, we saw from the accounts of several participants that they had very warm and caring fathers. Considering this, it can be argued that not all Georgian men are restricted by masculine ideas in terms of expressing the warmth. It appeared that there are fathers who display emotional commitment. These fathers in turn, were remembered and recalled with deep love and emotions by my interviewees.

5.5 Discussions

In this chapter, I have discussed father’s attitudes towards their roles and responsibilities; as well as their participation in household labor and child care. While doing so the concept of “doing gender” appeared to be very relevant. According to West and Zimmerman (1987) individuals’ behaviors are shaped by socially set gender roles and stereotypes; in other words, by performing certain conducts individuals display their gender. In the case of my research, for fathers being in the paid work was seen as the most proper way of being a man. Whilst, doing domestic and care work were seen as feminine acts, and hence not masculine. White (1994) indicates that because men are always in a privileged position in the paid labor market it results in their limited involvement in domestic life (see literature review). Halrynjo (2009) on the other hand, argues that reduced working hours doesn’t necessarily guarantee men’s higher participation in family life. The majority of my study participants can be placed in the category which Halrynjo (2009) coins as “*The career position.*” As discussed in the literature review, men in the given position are concerned with their public life and their contributions in domestic realm is strictly limited. However, being the provider doesn’t seem to be an enjoyable

duty for Georgian men. As we have seen, interviewees often complained about excessive stress and worries, connected to the country's unstable economic and political situation. White (1994) also emphasizes men's stress while tackling the breadwinning role. According to her, men are judged according to their financial status, while other qualities or personal attributions don't seem to have a significant value; this, as argued before, points at the dominance of hegemonic masculinity in the expression of parenting practices (White 1994).

In the introduction of this chapter, I have mentioned three aspects of paternal involvement (Lamb M.E 1987). In case of my research participants, the majority of them displayed a high level of responsibility, but a low degree of availability, and especially of interaction. My research participants' paternal involvement can also be analysed through Lamb's typology (1987 in Marsiglio, Day & Lamb 2000). In both generations, they seemed to practice only *economic* and *emotional support of mothers*, with the exception of *direct interaction with children*. And indeed, as the above mentioned examples illustrate, apart from the importance of breadwinning, fathers' involvement in childcare was often limited to helping their wife. However, both, the fathers' and mothers' accounts demonstrate that wives didn't necessarily seem to seek for higher involvement from their partners (see also chapter seven), something which made fathers state that they simply did not find a need to be more involved; everything concerning childcare was already provided for by their wives. Women's satisfaction with the existing gendered division of domestic labor is also illustrated in the Georgian studies (see literature review). Thus, it can be argued that, similar to Georgian men, women too possess strong gender ideas, where fulfillment of their roles, in many cases, are completed in terms of child care and domestic labor.

The chapter also presents fathers' personal experiences with their own parents, particularly with their dads. Participants mainly spoke with warmth and love about their parents. However, some of the interviewees' complained about their fathers being strict and distant, something which again points to the hegemony of masculine behavior.

Fathers' joys and worries about their children were also discussed in this chapter. Rebecca Kay (2006), based on her research in Siberian Russia argues that men's worries towards their children are higher than society views it. While analyzing my findings fathers' strong emotional bonds with their children were easy to see. Their memories of happy moments and worries were indeed expression of their love and care. However, while comparing young and old fathers' narratives, their concerns varied in some aspects. Specifically, young fathers were

more worried about their children's (especially sons) gender identity development, and their joys were connected to their emotions when the children were born. The elder fathers, in contrast, were more worried about their children's educational and future plans; this perhaps was derived from the reason that elder fathers had more life experience and thus, didn't want their children to have a tough life.

All in all, the findings presented in this chapter indicate how ideas of masculinity and gender norms shape fathers' perceptions and parenting practices. It appears from the discussions that Georgian fathers didn't practice fathering roles commonly associated with "New fatherhood" neither in case of domestic work nor in terms of child care activities. Although the lack of time was given as the reason for such low engagement, their narratives demonstrate that hegemonic gender norms and ideas play a significant role.

CHAPTER 6

IDEAS ABOUT MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY IN PARENTING

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, men's perceptions of their roles as fathers has been illustrated. We have seen that being a parent is not separate from one's gender identity; on the contrary, fathers are actively performing their gender roles while being a parent, primarily by being the 'breadwinner'.

In this chapter, the female participants' understanding of their children's gender and their views on motherhood will be explored. Additionally, fathers' opinions about "the good Georgian man" will be presented, highlighting the relevance of the concepts of hegemonic masculinity, gender display and essentialism. As addressed in the theory section, hegemonic masculinity is associated with dominance and power, which can be displayed by certain behaviors and acts (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994). It is also deemed to be the most proper way to be a man (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

In participants' descriptions of "a good Georgian man", common patterns of hegemonic masculinity were easy to recognize; being strong, traditional, and being a decision maker were some of the traits said to characterize a decent Georgian man. Social cognitive theory suggests that parents often have gender-differentiated approaches towards their offspring. While discussing their attitude towards children, it appeared that fathers deliberately promoted certain gendered behaviour in their children; by doing so, they sought to ensure that children will display appropriate gender characteristics as they mature. In general, the fathers expressed a desire for their sons to be masculine and daughters to be feminine. The concept of femininity or masculinity was not the only stated reason for the difference in parenting practices towards male versus female children; fathers and mothers were seen to possess essential natures (masculine and feminine), that contributed to their different parenting roles. Participant's reasoning on these issues will be discussed in this chapter.

6.2 What is a Good Georgian Man?

Towards the end of interviews I always finished our conversations with the question “what is it like to be a Georgian man and what is a good Georgian man like?” Participant’s answers were mainly split into two categories: the ones who supported the traditional image of a man, one who displays masculine behaviors; such as, fighting, drinking, decision making and breadwinning. And others, who were against this traditional image of the Georgian man. There were supporters of both category in each generation. However, elder fathers were less concerned about man’s physical attributes or whether he was a decision maker or not. On the contrary, they pointed out that good man supposed to be a gentleman in the first place, who is polite and respects women. Here are some answers from elder male participants:

“He should be a loyal and an honest partner. If there is an opportunity to make a lot of money, great, if not, he should act in such a way to compensate it. If he is not a breadwinner, then he has more time and thus should help his wife and use his intellect and abilities in other things”.
(Elder father)

“I would say it shortly and straightforward, if you are the man you should be a real man. You should respect women and elderly, distinguish bad and good, be polite; when woman gets in the bus my child should free the seat for her, and that’ll be the image of my family”. (Elder father)

“What is the basis of the word “gentleman” and “a good woman”? The man who has high values and never fails to meet them and the same goes for a woman”. (Elder father)

Unlike those elder fathers, some of the younger men expressed themselves in a more patriarchal form:

“I have never been to other parts of the world and don’t know how is the family practice in other countries; but I think that man should be superior in his family. Not because of the tradition, but because a woman is a weak gender and can’t often assess something seriously. Of course, there are some women who take risks and are stronger, but those are very rare. In generally women are weaker and gentler. I don’t think that you should not consider their opinion, I listen to my wife’s opinion, but the final word is usually mine; this is not because I am a bad guy, but I think I can make better decisions”. (Young father)

However, one young father, who was relatively younger compared to other participants in the same generation, didn't seem to share the existing stereotypical image of a Georgian man, he explained:

“It is hard for my father-in-law to understand why I don't drink alcohol; he thinks that all Georgian men should drink. Also, outside the capital I can't wear shorts when we have visitors; it doesn't make any sense for me”.

Although majority of men in both generations believed that essential differences between men and women determine the hierarchy between them, the display of masculinity was more prevalent in the younger generation. For example one young father stated:

“Man should be as he was before, hardworking and a fighter. A woman should be tender, gentle, and strong [psychologically] and at the same time vulnerable. “

As it appeared from many men's narratives, social judgment was important aspects in shaping their approach and thinking. Many of them highlighted toughness of being a Georgian men, saying that society puts higher requirements for them. This is well explained by one of my interviewees, representing the younger generation.

“It is very hard because society requests from you to be very cool, that the wife doesn't talk back to you and if she is angry she should never scream at you. Shouting or quarreling should not go out of the family, which is foolish, as partners are often having an argument, and I believe it is absolutely normal. It is also very hard to be a man in Georgia because many men experience difficulty meeting their breadwinning roles; moreover, we hear from women telling us that we have bad traditions. I have one acquaintance, who said to me that while having a good time and drinking we admire women but at home we beat them. However, there is an opposite opinion as well, that women also decide many things in families and have a significant influence”. (Young father)

One of the younger fathers, while speaking about the hardships of being man in Georgia highlights the difficulties of being a woman in Georgian society.

“If you are a man in Georgia two things are crucial. The first is that you should know fighting... Because if you live in Georgia and you have a different opinion from society, it is better to have a self-defense skills. When I had a different opinion, I was always beaten because of that, then I learned how to fight. However, it is also very hard to be a woman in Georgia. From what I observe it is very hard or even impossible to do many things in this country because they are

woman. I often thank God that I am not a woman. But when you are a man and you don't like some traditions and what other traditional man tries to teach you, then it's a big chance that there might be a fight; thus having fighting skills is very useful here". (Young father)

As illustrated in the above quotes, some men had objections regarding the existing expressions of hegemonic masculinity. As previously mentioned, drinking alcohol is considered a common attribution of a masculine man. Therefore, the ones who don't share or practice this habit are often subjects of social judgment. As Connell notes, those who confront the notions of hegemonic masculinity often become subjects of discrimination (Cornwall 1995, p.11). In addition to this, men who objected to the stereotypical understanding of the "good Georgian man" seemed genuinely less patriarchal compared to other fathers. However, their opinions regarding different approaches towards raising sons and daughters were still similar to other more "traditional" fathers (see below).

It is clear that participant opinions of what constitutes the proper Georgian man were split in two. Some men strictly followed set gender-differentiated rules, while others expressed objections towards existing gendered obligations. When discussing generational perspectives, some of the younger fathers expressed dissatisfaction. They indicated that often it's not possible to meet all gender expectations, but they still recognized a hierarchy between men and women and the dominant position of the male. In addition to this, although elder fathers had strict gender guidelines, expressions of masculinity were less explicit in their narratives. They mainly focused on personal attributions of a good person. As one elder father has stated, "*a good man is supposed to be a gentleman, who respects women and has moral values.*"

6.3 Gender of the Child

The initial version of my interview guide did not include questions about offspring gender preference. It did, however, contain a question about father's expectations before the child was born. When describing their expectations, the fathers often raised the issue of their child's gender. To be more specific, they mentioned that they expected a boy or that their happiness was doubled when having a son; thus, after observing this pattern, a question about the child's gender was added to the interview guide. As discussed in the literature review, relevant studies also demonstrate the male's privileged position and importance in Georgian community.

According to UNDP's study report (2013), 45 percent of the respondents prefer to have a son in a case where they are given only one option.

Besides the initial preference regarding gender of the child, fathers also had different approaches towards raising sons and daughters. The explanations for this were various. However, the most common reason appeared to be the natural differences between man and woman, and the opinion that they need gender-specific approaches. Opinions about this issue were quite similar in all study participants, and this will be further discussed below.

6.3.1 Importance of Having a Son

The fathers I have interviewed were often quite sincere about the fact that they wanted to have a son. Although this pattern appeared to be common in both generations, it was noticeably more frequent in case of the younger generation. At first, this may seem paradoxical due to the expectation that the younger generation is expected to have a less biased mentality about gender. However, when examining the findings, I found a very logical explanation for it. Moreover, the reasons for the preference towards having a son differed among generations.

As mentioned above, younger interviewees were more concerned about having a son than elder ones. The majority of younger fathers claimed that it's more interesting to raise a boy, as they believed that they would have more common interests with sons. One study participant, a young father of a small daughter, stated it in the following way:

“I would be closer to my son. We can do many things together, like watching football or going for the beer. You cannot discuss cars and manly³ things with your daughter“. (Young father)

Another young father also expresses the opinion that the people of the same gender have more common things to share:

“I wanted a son, as I did not know what I could teach my daughter” (Young father)

The preference to raise the son doesn't appear to apply only to Georgian men. As stated in the literature review, the fathers interviewed by Nydegger and Mittenen felt that “they shared the world with their sons, while girls were seen as ‘the other’” (in White 1994 p, 123). Apart from

³ In the Georgian language, there is no direct translation for the word “masculinity”. However, the word “manly” (კაცურნი) carries the same meaning as the word “masculine” does.

the fact that young Georgian fathers considered having a son as more interesting, it seems that they wanted to have an influence on their children as well. That is, to teach them “manly” things, transmit skills, and make them like themselves. Thus, they considered having the son more relevant for those parenting practices. For example, one of the younger fathers explained:

“I was expecting a boy, but the girl was born. Maybe it was because of our mentality, maybe because of the genus [surname] successor tradition. Also, a man wants to have a man next to him. So boy would be better, man wants his child to be alike him and have an influence on him, teach him, share his experience, etc...” (Young father)

In many cases, young fathers reported to express higher happiness when expecting a boy. One young father’s statement helps illuminate this, although he himself came to terms with having a daughter:

“My dad died at early age, and I wanted a son so that I could give him my father’s name. However, during the first eight months of pregnancy, I knew that the baby was a girl, and I was ok with it. Moreover, when we went to the doctor to find out the gender of our child and doctor told me it was a girl, I started to jump from happiness. The doctor thought that I have misheard something, and she repeated that it was a baby girl. Then I replied that I knew it and I was very happy, then she said: “I thought you misheard, since usually when I say it’s a girl men are not very happy, they sometimes even leave the room” (Young father)

As this example illustrates, expecting a son brought higher levels of happiness for many young men. However, narratives of elder fathers indicate that, preference of having a boy may change as men age. For example, during interviews some of the elder fathers mentioned that they used to think differently, but now they know that gender doesn’t matter. These fathers said that they have realized that daughters and sons both need equal attention and effort. One of the elder fathers shared his experience and expressed his view in the following way:

“By the time I had first child it was not possible to know the gender of the child in advance, and after all, with the first child the gender doesn’t matter so much as you can have more children later. Now, I know that it’s a girl or a boy they both need attention. However, when I was younger my opinion was different; I wanted a boy because of our tradition” (Elder father)

Another elder man expressed the same position:

“When I was younger I wanted a boy, maybe because I was too young. Now I have three grown up children and I love them equally. I have two girls and we are very close friends. Maybe I

think like this because I have a son, but I believe that my opinion would be the same in any case. If you raise a good person, gender doesn't really matter.” (Elder father)

Another interviewee also expressed the attitude that after some time, gender preference disappears:

“I had a very busy job. When I was back at home, my daughter was always asleep. Then I changed my job and had more time to establish the communication with her. I discovered that the gender does not really matter.” (Young father)

Considering this example of a young father as well as the narratives of elder fathers, who stated that their opinion was different at early stage of their lives, it seems that young fathers often have a prejudice that having a son is more interesting than having a daughter. However, after being in a close relationship with their children their viewpoint changes in some cases, as it is shown in the examples above.

As mentioned before, it was rare that elder fathers had explicit preference for a particular gender. The few who did had different reasons than the younger fathers. Unlike younger fathers, their positions were not derived from the reasons such as, *“it's more interesting to raise the son”, and having a son allows one “to have more common things to do”,* etc. On the contrary, elder fathers usually wanted to have name successors, saying that it's a Georgian tradition and daughter can't continue the name of the family. For example, one of the elder fathers said:

“It was planned and I wanted a boy specifically. It is in our mentality of Georgian men. Maybe because of the surname successor, which is necessary for every family; also he will support you more. When my first son was born I went to drink and celebrate.” (Elder father)

As discussed in the literature review, studies in Georgian society illustrate that for Georgian men, having a son is an important event. The reasons given for this are men's “ability” to continue the family name and the assumed fact that a son will take care of his father's property, which according to Georgian traditions is passed on to the son; while the daughter leaves home and moves to another family (Japaridze et.al 2014). However, in the case of the participants in this study, the issue of name succession was significant to only a few of the elder fathers. Additionally, while some of the elder fathers expressed desire to have a son, other elder fathers stated the opposite. For instance, one elder father explained:

*“Why would I want to have a son? To have a surname successor? Am I noble or what? *Laughing*.” (Elder father)*

Another elder man states his attitude towards gender, and even explains the positives of having a representation of both genders:

“I can’t imagine why someone would prefer one gender over the other. I don’t need a child for a fight or as a successor. On the contrary, I think that when there is mixed gender among siblings they learn many things about the opposite gender, which is quite useful in life” (elder father)

Another father, who was the oldest among my study participants, also expressed indifference towards the preference of a male child.

“I think I even wanted the girl more. At least today I don’t have son at all. My eldest daughter is married and the younger is eighteen years old. She loves me a lot and I would never want to have son instead of her”. (Elder father)

According to their accounts, for many elder fathers the health and wellbeing of a child was far more important than the gender. However, majority of those fathers were still very traditional in some aspects. For example, going out drinking and celebrating when the child is born rather than staying at home in the first days after birth. This can be seen from the following account of one elder father:

“I was 45 when I had first child, the gender did not matter for me, and main thing was the child would be healthy. The first wife died and with her I did not have a child. So, when I find out I became a father, as all the Georgians, I also went to drink. “(Elder father)

While the desire to have a son was present in both generations, generally elder fathers displayed less of a preference for sons than the younger ones. For the young fathers, the issue of name successor didn’t seem to have significant value. Young fathers’ reasons for their preference for a male child were that son is more fun to raise, and they could have a greater influence on him. These attitudes displayed by young fathers seem to be due to the fact that the young fathers do not yet have grown up children, and thus had not yet established adequate communication with them to form a significant relationship. This can be assumed from the fact that the majority of elder fathers who displayed no preference at the time of interview stated that their opinions on gender preference changed after their children grew up; alternately, in case of elder fathers who stated a preference for a son, their reason was always the desire for a name successor.

6.3.2 Raising Daughters vs Raising Sons

According to my literature review, raising a daughter is often thought to be the realm of mothers, while raising a son is the domain of fathers. Daughters are seen as gentle individuals who are in need of protection while boys require a stricter approach (White 1994). This viewpoint was not uncommon among study participants. Father's opinions about gender roles were especially evident while discussing differences between raising daughters and sons. Separate from the preference for having a son, almost all participants in both generations stated that sons and daughters need different child-rearing approaches; they should not be raised in the same way. Social cognitive theory's approach to gender identity development suggests that such a gender segregated attitude plays a crucial role in shaping one's gender identity (Bussey 2011). As Bussey (2011) states, girls and boys from early childhood receive different judgments from their parents for performing the same actions; thus, children's gender identities are shaped from early childhood (see theory chapter). In addition, fathers are more concerned about their sons' "correct" upbringing and their expectations for their son's masculine behavior are higher (Raag & Rackliff 1998 in Bussey 2011).

Within the context of these findings, fathers' opinions were mainly derived from ideas about the different nature of women as opposed to men. The majority of fathers agreed that a son needs a more strict approach, while a daughter should feel more loved and requires gentler treatment. For instance, one of the young fathers stated:

"Boy and girl should be raised differently. Firstly, I respect tenderness in women. Some women use impolite words, I think in case of such women male hormones are dominant. My daughter should be very gentle. For the girl, you should help them more in life, unlike the boys. However, I don't have any special request that my daughter must be a virgin before the marriage. I will raise her in a way that she will not do anything that she might regret later on." (Young father)

Another young father expresses a similar opinion:

"Although I don't have a daughter, I think my approach would be different. For example, if a son does something wrong you can bump your fist on the table and shout, but not in the case of a girl. On the contrary, you should explain to her in a calm way. For the boys it's more of a "manly" thing." (Young father)

This pattern of different approaches based on gender was evident even in the narratives of the men whose attitudes seemed to be less patriarchal. For example, this young father, for whom it was insignificant to have a son explained:

“If I had a boy, I think my approach would be different. Maybe it’s a stereotypical thinking. , For example, I would want him to play football, know some other “guy [masculine] things”, to be more developed physically and to protect himself. Also, to know ethical things, like how to treat a woman. When you raise your boy you don’t want him to be feminine, as even women want us to be manly.” (Young father)

Some other men said that in the beginning, when a child is still small, one doesn’t need to have different approaches towards different genders, but they still firmly believed in the necessity of gender specific approaches “from the right time”.

The most commonly held belief among male participants regardless of generation was that a girl needs to feel more warmth and love, while a son doesn’t. However, they specified that this referred only to fathers; a mother should show equal warmth to son and daughter. Fathers, on the other hand, should remain relatively cold towards the son, while giving a lot of warmth to the daughter. For instance, an elder father of a four children shared his experience:

“I have different approaches; I treat my son more strictly. I can’t always hug the boy, maybe due to the reason that I did not have very close relationship with my father; and for my son I thought maybe it’s better not to be very close. However, I told to my wife always to give and show warmth to him, but I remained stricter and as an authority for him. Nonetheless, he was close to mother in childhood, but after he became a teenager, everything has changed, he became closer towards me and very cold towards the mother, I don’t know what happened. “ (Elder father)

One of the young fathers expresses a similar viewpoint on the necessity of having strict approach towards a son:

“A son needs different approach but not in the beginning. The father should set different priorities for him and should distinguish between male and female in his parenting approaches. A girl is more tender, she needs more care since she will get married and must be used to a good treatment. For the boy, a father should raise him more strictly and it’s harder to raise him compared to a girl, as he resists more. However, at the same time you are both men and you can understand each other better.” (Young father)

Another elder father, who is the father of the two sons, also shares the opinion that a female child needs more attention and care:

“I would try to fulfill her desires and wishes more than a boy’s. Also, I might give less attention to the son, but not for the daughter; a girl requires more attention, it is in the nature of a girl. Generally, the boy gives more while the girl expects to receive more.”

It seems from the examples above that boys are raised more strictly in order that they become tougher, less emotional, and more resilient; while girls are treated with more warmth so that they fulfill their gender identity by becoming tender and dependent. In short, fathers want their daughters to be feminine and sons to be masculine. Such gender specific approaches lead to a different relationship with son and daughter. Sons have a closer relationship with their fathers, as they spend more time together doing “manly” things. For instance, this young father openly states reasons for his different relationship with his son and his daughter:

“With the girl I don’t have so active communications as with the boy, but I make her every wish come true and of course I love her also, but for example, I take boys with me to the restaurant with friends but not the girl. It’s because there is the society of men where there are impolite words said, which will be unpleasant for a girl. Also, boy’s interrelationship is “manly” and girl’s communications between each other is different. I want my child to know the difference between girls’ relationship and boys’ relationship.” (Young father)

Bussey (2011) states that parents’ feedback to children’s conduct are commonly gendered. Referring to other authors’ work, she highlights that parents who support stereotypical gender norms promote gender-related activities in their children. Bussey’s argument appears to hold true in the case of the participants in this study. Almost all of the interviewees in both generations argued that boys and girls need different parenting approaches. Even those who expressed themselves in the least patriarchal way about other issues agreed on the importance of different parenting approaches for sons compared to daughters. Participants believed that sons require a stricter parenting technique in order to foster masculinity, while daughters should be treated with more love and warmth to encourage femininity. West and Zimmerman (1987) argue that men have greater responsibility for performing appropriate gender display than women. Thus, fathers promote gendered behavior in their sons to a higher degree than in their daughters (Bussey 2011). West and Zimmerman’s observations, as demonstrated in the narratives above, are also relevant in the case of Georgian fathers. As stated in the theory section, the significance of male identity in Georgia points to existing patriarchal norms and

highlights a man's dominant position in Georgian society (Connell 1995). In addition, there was no generational difference in parenting approaches of boys and girls. However, in terms of son preference, fathers' opinions differed between young and elder fathers. Young fathers believed that it's better to have a boy because interactions with the same gender were assumed to be more interesting. Alternately, some elder fathers wanted to have a son, as he would continue the family name. As discussed in the literature review section these same patterns are also demonstrated by other Georgian studies.

6.4 Fathers Attitudes towards Motherhood and their Contributions to Child Development

In this section, fathers' opinions about their special contributions in their children's lives will be presented, as well as their ideas about motherhood and mother's roles. A highly debated topic in the realm of fatherhood studies is the concept of "essentialism". According to essentialist thoughts on fatherhood, fathers based on their gender identity, can affect their child's development in a specific and irreplaceable way (Marsiglio & Pleck, 2005). Fathers interviewed as part of this study also recognized biological characteristics of parenting contributions depending on parent's gender.

Participants's view of men's masculine and women's feminine identity as essential for child development is strikingly similar to essentialism. According to fathers, each gender serves different and irreplaceable roles, and male identity was viewed as particularly important for sons. Although interviewees stressed the importance of the presence of a male role model in children's lives, in many cases mother's role was said to be more significant. According to the narratives of the fathers, the reasons for such beliefs were the physiological. Specifically, the men stressed the importance of the mother in pregnancy, giving birth and breastfeeding. Such an essentialist approach was not expressed by fathers alone. In the next chapter, the views of young people will be discussed, where essentialist approach is also demonstrated by youth.

6.4.1 Fathers' Contributions to Child Development

Participants mainly argued that mothers and fathers contribute to different aspects of child's development. Specifically, they believed that fathers can endow their sons with masculine

characteristics while mothers contribute to girl's feminine nature. Having gender appropriate traits was considered crucial within the narratives of fathers. For instance, one of the younger father stated it in the following way:

“I think the girl needs a mother, and a boy needs a father. This is because we all need role models. If, for example, the girl doesn't have a mother, how can she learn all the women's features? And on the contrary, sometimes when a boy is raised in the surroundings of women they often lack masculine traits.”

One elder father shared the same opinion, he stated:

“I think that if I wouldn't have a father I would be different in many things. My dad taught me how to be a man in the first place. “

Another of the elder men raised quite an interesting issue when discussing this subject.

“I never hug my son, I can't do that, with my daughter it's okay, but with a son I can't do it. However, the child must receive all the warmth. Therefore, the mother is necessary. She can hug and express warmth more freely. I even ask her to do it more often, as I can't do it”.

As evident in this example, fathers often find it difficult to give warmth to their sons; this points to a certain form of hegemonic masculinity in Georgian society, where emotions are believed to be the display of the feminine nature. This issue was often raised by other participants as well, when, as discussed in the previous sections of this chapter, they indicated that a daughter should receive more warmth than the son. In addition, fathers often highlighted respect towards single mothers, but also mentioned that such children will always differ from children who were raised by both parents. As one participant puts it, *“Having a father is the greatest support in life. I can tell it from my example”.*

Thus, fathers had quite “essentialist” assumptions of their roles and contributions; this notion was similar in both generations. As the examples above illustrate, the participants supported their viewpoint with their ideas about the biological differences between men and women. In addition, they highlighted the father's importance for shaping a son's masculine identity. Moreover, fathers often reported the importance of having distinctly delineated gender identities, stating that women should have feminine features and men - masculine. Providing a gender role model was perceived as one of the father's main objectives in the child's life. Participants suggested that if a child lacks male or female role model, they often have *“broken pictures of man and woman”*. Apart from this, the discussions around this issue also covered

some of the difficult periods of a child's life, such as the teenage years. Experienced fathers in particular stated that, in such periods of a child's life, authority and psychological strength is crucial to handle the situations and to direct the child on the right path. According to participants, these traits of authority and psychological strength are the purview of men.

6.4.2 Fathers' Attitudes towards Motherhood

As previously mentioned, the majority of participants believed that the mother's importance is much greater in child's life than the father's. The main argument for this was always related to female biology. This is how one young father views motherhood:

"No matter what kind of relationship father and children have, the mother is always 8-9 months ahead in a relationship with them because of pregnancy. Look at the biology, from the father's side it's just, you know, the minor thing and all the rest of the reactions had developed in mother's organism. "

As discussed above, in most cases men believed that the mother and father contributed to different aspects of a child's development and provided diverse support for children. Relying on their narratives, such diversity seemed to be due to the inherent difference between male and female identities, that is, women's and men's different problem-seeing and problem-solving skills, different emotional conditions, needs and priorities. As an example, one of the older men states:

"Man can think more logically than women and about decision making for instance. This is not something I am imagining, but it is scientific fact. Women rely more on intuition, emotions. So, a collaboration of both is crucial in terms of synergy effect. The child should receive both traits from each parent. With mother they have biological attachment, but with father it takes time; initially you might be stranger, and then child sees that you are contributing to his or her upbringing, and you also become a beloved one. "

"Maybe mothers are more important, to be sincere, my children love their mother more [his wife], they respect her a lot, I think even more than other children love their mothers. (Elder father)

Fathers were very emphatic about the opinion that women are naturally more important to child development because of biology. *"They have special bonds to the child"* stated one young father. Participants also used examples to support their opinion. They often highlighted their

own mother's special role in their lives and expressed love and gratitude. *"Father was always there for me, but my mom... She could forgive me everything"*. Other supporting arguments included the idea of the *"natural instinct of motherhood"*. Another young father said:

"I think the mother is more important because it's more biological instinct that changes the woman after giving the birth, a woman has those things that are imperative on the early stage of child's development."

Interviewees also mentioned father's and mother's involvement in relation to the child's age. Similarly to the young people interviewed, illustrated in chapter seven, fathers of both generations argued that until the child is five or six old, the mother's importance is higher. After that, the mother's and father's roles were seen as equal. For example, one of the young fathers explained his opinion in this manner:

"For a child it does not matter who will change diapers, he will not remember it anyway, it does not matter if it is a mother, father or grandmother."

A similar opinion was shared by elder fathers also, although they were less radical in their expressions.

"I think father's importance is larger at a later stage of child's development. From the age, when the child starts social life, making decisions and mistakes. Here having a father is crucial. Of course, he should be there before it as well, but the importance is bigger at the later stage."

Although there were some fathers who believed that the father should be involved from the very beginning, these fathers were not in the majority.

"I think the father should be involved from the beginning, as this is the time when he or she is most vulnerable. I think both parents are equally important from the beginning. You might not have time to do as much as mother maybe, but the father should definitely be involved at every stage."

To sum up, majority of men felt firmly sure about the biological bonds between mother and child, which in return contributed to their unique relationships and a special love between them. Female physiology and a natural instinct for motherhood was suggested as an argument for the mother's greater importance in child-rearing. However, when discussing the father's special contributions, the presence of a male role model was seen as a significant for child

development, particularly in case of sons. Thus, participants viewed the mother's role in terms of care-taking activities, and the father's role in terms of a gender role model.

6.5 Conclusion

West and Zimmerman (1987) state that gender display means emphasizing the differences between masculinity and femininity. In case of this study's participants, fathers encouraged gender differentiations in their children by practicing different parenting approaches for sons as opposed to daughters. Since display of proper masculinity is important in the patriarchal societies such as the Georgian one (Connell's 1995), fathers felt greater responsibility to guarantee their sons' gender appropriate development.

As has been demonstrated, attempts to promote development of masculine traits in sons, and feminine traits in daughters, were common in both generations. The most widely used approach was *Direct tuition* (Bussey 2011), in which fathers inspired gender specific behavior in their children. According to Lamb (2010), fathers with strong gender stereotypes are more likely to have a gender based parenting approach. This was true in the case of the interviewees in this study as well. Although most participants supported a gendered approach towards children, fathers with more patriarchal beliefs were more explicit in their opinions. The different approaches towards sons and daughters are not limited to the Georgian context; White's study (1994) on Australian men illustrates similar findings (see literature review). Kay (2006), based on her research in Siberia, states that fathers in her study demonstrated love and warmth towards their daughters; however, in case of sons their main goal was to prepare them "for the demands of public life" (Kay, Rebecca 2006:134). Georgian fathers' strict approach towards their sons can be understood as their efforts to make them independent and prepare them for the social world, where masculin behavior appears to be highly valued. As we have seen from the fathers' accounts, some were unable to hug their sons, instead, they asked mothers to do so. However, giving warmth to daughters was seen as a necessary contribution to the development their feminine nature. As stated by Magaraggia (2012), masculinity limits space for physical closeness and emotions. Thus, it can be argued that such behavior from fathers points to existing tensions between fathering practices and hegemonic masculinity, where father's desires to demonstrate love to their sons are handicapped by existing masculine beliefs. As noted in the literature review, parents, due to fixed gendered parenting expectations,

experience struggle while meeting those standards (Marsiglio & Pleck, 2005). As Ridgeway and Correll (2004) argue, hegemonic gender beliefs not only define our actions and attitudes, but also significantly influence other peoples 's approach to us.

The dominance of masculine identity in Georgian society is not only evident from fathers' parenting approaches. The preference to have a son found among most young and a few old fathers also point to the superiority of the male status in my study area. In addition to this, the persistence of hegemonic masculinity was evident in the descriptions of a "good Georgian man" as well. Although a few of the young fathers expressed objections to the set descriptions of a "good man", elder fathers seemed generally to have less "masculine" ideas about how a decent man should behave. Thus it can be argued that, as men age, the physical attributions of masculine man, such as being strong and a fighter seems to fade away; while personal qualities, such as being a good person, being polite and a gentleman gain more significance.

As I have already noted, the concept of "essentialism" appeared to be relevant for the interpretation of father's understanding of gendered parenting roles. As Magaraggia (2012) argues, traditional gender norms in the society are well illustrated when describing motherhood. Fathers within this study viewed motherhood as an essential instinct of a woman; thus, women were seen as more responsible for child care tasks. Apart from this, fathers in both generations argued that male and female parents, with their corresponding gender identities, initiate the development of the gender related traits in a child. Fathers were seen essential for sons proper gender development, while mother's femininity was deemed crucial for learning "to be a woman". Father's opinions on motherhood, their different parenting approaches towards sons versus daughters, and their role in their son's gender development, may indicate that fathers, in addition to their provider role, also undertake the role of a gender role model.

CHAPTER 7

YOUNG PEOPLE AND MOTHERS – DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES OF FATHERHOOD

7.1 Introduction

In the previous two empirical chapters, we have seen fathers' opinions about fatherhood, their involvement in families, and their viewpoints about motherhood among others. This chapter explores mothers' and young people's perceptions of fatherhood. The studies discussed in the introduction and the literature review, demonstrate Georgian women's bold gendered differentiated approach to parenthood and domestic duties. In most cases, as indicated by the literature, women perceive domestic and caregiving tasks as their primary responsibilities and thus, they undertake the majority of household duties. Considering that all interviewed women had children and the experience of living with child's father, they were inquired about their personal experiences. Mothers were asked if the father of their children participated in the child care and household labor, and most importantly, if they were satisfied with fathers' level of involvement and what they would like to improve in their relationships. It is also worth mentioning that the majority of these women were employed.

In FGDs, young people were asked to discuss father's roles and responsibilities, as well as describe the image of a "good father". Numerous literature illustrates that young people play an important part in the process of social change and transformation of the set cultural meanings of gender roles (LaFont 2010; Lewis and Clift 2001 in Japaridze et al. 2013). However, as mentioned in the literature review, Georgian youth does not necessarily demonstrate liberal viewpoints (Japaridze et al. 2013). According to the social cognitive theory on gender identity development, personal experiences with parents play a significant role in shaping one's gender attitudes (Bussey 2011). Being raised in traditional and patriarchal families seems to have an influence on shaping young people's gender values. To be more specific, individuals raised in families where duties between parents are gender segregated are more likely to have bold ideas about men's and women's roles. However, according to Connell, individuals are not merely "modeling" their parents, but they actively participate in gender learning process (Connell, 2009: 96). All things considered, youth's personal experiences with their fathers should be seen

as an important factor determining their views on gender roles and fatherhood. In addition to this, having mixed gender composition of FGDs, diverging standpoints between male and female participants emerged, and these divergences will be discussed in this chapter. It is also important to mention that, except one male, all of the partakers of FGDs were unmarried. Considering that I have obtained only short interviews with mothers (see methodology chapter), the chapter will mainly focus on findings based on two FGDs, while mothers' feedback will be discussed more briefly. I will first disclose mothers' opinions, and then follow up with wider discussions on young people's FGDs.

7.1 "I Prefer to do Household Work myself, I know I will do it Better" – Narratives of Mothers

Due to the circumstances explained in the methodology chapter, it was impossible for me to conduct the initially planned FGDs with mothers. Instead, I have organized eight interviews, where few of the participants were divorced, but most of them were living with their husbands. The questions posed to them did not include their relationship with children. My basic interest was to find out their perceptions on good fathering practices and opinions on household labor distribution, based on their experiences.

In general, mothers were satisfied with their husbands' involvement. When asked about men's participation in the household labor, they admitted that it was not frequent. However, they added that in case of their request they often were ready to help. For example one married woman, living with her husband and three grown up children said:

"He is always working. Thus, when he comes home tired, I try not to ask him anything. However, If I ask he usually does it, as I do so rarely."

The majority of women, whose husbands spend most of their time at work, replied in the same manner. One married women stated:

"I try not to ask him anything, not because he will not do it but because I see that he is very tired, and if I have more time I prefer to do it myself."

On the other hand, there were women who simply preferred to do all of the household activities themselves, as they did not like the quality of work done by their husbands.

“He sometimes tries to help me. Of course it is not every day that he wants to clean after himself, but I don’t like it when he does so. First of all, after he cleans one thing then I have to clean the whole kitchen, and secondly I don’t even like the results. So I prefer to do it the way I like it.”

Regarding women whose husbands were unemployed, they showed great empathy while talking about their men; they often highlighted that their husbands were very depressed while sitting at home. For instance, a middle aged woman who was living alone with her husband while their two children were studying abroad, expressed her opinion in the following way:

“I see that he is very stressed about the fact that he is currently unemployed. Even though we don’t have financial problems now, for him it is still a tragedy. Of course, I never complain about anything. On the contrary, I try to support him in every way. Whenever I come home, the house is always tidy. He may not be cleaning it but at least he doesn’t make a mess and can clean after himself. “

When discussing household labor with mothers, interestingly, they never said that it was a shared activity between their partners. Mothers mainly used the term “helping me”, which, as explained by them was quite sufficient. Additionally, in several cases women had other helping hands for the household or child care tasks, such as grandparents or nannies.

While married mothers were satisfied by the contribution of their husbands, the situation was different in the case of the divorced ones. They complained that their ex-husbands did not help them at all, not even financially. One of the interviewees explained:

“My daughter will become a student soon. My ex-husband is not interested in anything. He thinks that calling his daughter once a week is enough; and most importantly he doesn’t provide any financial support for us. “

When it comes to mothers’ opinions about the relationship between their husbands and children, the lack of fathers’ involvement in child care was not seen as an issue. However, they preferred that their child husband had a warmer relationship. Especially in case of boys, some mothers stated that men found it hard to accept their children the way they were, because they expected too much from their sons. For example, one mother said:

“Perhaps the hardest thing for parents in general is to accept your child as he or she is. We all have our expectation how we want our children to behave, but life doesn’t always turn out that

way. My son is a bit different from other Georgian boys. My husband finds it hard to find a common ground with him. I am worried about their distant relationship, but what can I do.”

Another mother, who was married for 20 years and had two children (20 year old boy and 13 year old girl), expressed a similar opinion:

“With the girl everything is fine, they don’t have any conflicts, but I am worried about his relationship with his son. He is very strict towards him and they often argue. I don’t know what to do. I think Georgian men have higher expectations and requirements towards boys compared to girls”.

All things considered, married women appreciated their husbands’ breadwinning roles and didn’t complain about their limited involvement in domestic life; it was sufficient for them to receive the helping hand in the case of need. As observed, the reasons, why women didn’t ask for more engagement, varied; some of them felt sorry for their tired husbands while others preferred to do the household task themselves. However, many married mothers expressed a strong desire to see more understanding and commitment between their sons and husbands. In addition, as seen above, fathers in divorced families weren’t involved neither in terms of breadwinning nor in terms of emotional support towards their children. This was not only visible from mothers’ accounts, but also from young people’s stories as well, which will be discussed further below.

7.2 Youth’s Perceptions of a “Good Father”

When discussing father’s roles and duties, young people spoke from their personal experiences. Specifically, they named father’s duties and responsibilities depending on what they lacked in the relationship with their respective dads. Some of the participants stated that a father should support child’s dreams without trying to change them. Others were concerned about their dads’ lack of engagement in their lives, saying that the father should always be involved in child’s upbringing. Many of participants highlighted that father should not be very strict. For example, one of the girls explained:

“They often can’t measure how strict they should be, and thus they treat you like a child, even though you are already grown up. I guess in such situations it is difficult to have a friendly relationship. The good father is a friend of a child in the first place.”

Participants and especially girls agreed that for men, relationship with children is to a great extent connected with the relationship with their wives. This opinion was mainly raised by female participants. For instance, as one girl put it:

“There are fathers who love their wives and therefore they are very caring men, but when the love vanishes they also stop caring about children.”

During the discussion, two main issues have been raised. The first one concerned whether a father should be involved in the very early stages of child’s development, e.g. until he or she turns five years old. The second one was father’s participation in child care and whether it is connected to the upbringing of a child or just helping the wife. These two issues were interconnected during the discussions. Thus I will also discuss them in relation to each other.

The male participants in both FGDs argued that fathers’ involvement in the child upbringing is not necessary until the age of five or six, stating *“a child does not care who changes the diapers.”* For example, one male participant who was very firm on this opinion explained:

“The role of the father in child’s life is not very important until the child is five or six years old. During these years, mother’s role is vital. The father’s importance starts when the child’s gender identity is developing. I think that if the child does not see the father until the age of three, it will not change anything in child’s life. However, man should of course help his wife, but it is not necessary for child’s development. In Georgia, children are raised by mothers. I myself was also raised by my mother. “

Male participants even mentioned that until the child is unable to communicate with adults and give verbal feedback, it is just an “object” which needs the simplest care, which can be done by anybody. The only father in the group expressed the same opinion and supported it with his experience:

“The development of a child is happening in mother’s body, which means that when a child is born, the mother has stronger and closer bonds with him or her. I don’t understand why it is so important to change diapers. I have never changed diapers, but my son is five years old now, and we have a perfect relationship”.

The given examples illustrate that for men, participation in child care is an act of helping the wife, rather than practicing fathering. The same approach was very common in case of young fathers too. As discussed in chapter five, young dads often stated that participation in child care served as helping their wives, rather than carrying out parenting duties. Similar results were

seen in Magaraggia's study (2012) on Italian fathers. According to Magaraggia, while the child is still an infant, fathers see their duties in terms of helping their partner, and it is especially hard for them to perceive their parenting roles. As noted in the literature review, the lack of an early engagement in child's life may result in the emotional distance between a father and a child (Magaraggia 2012).

The majority of female participants argued that father should be involved in child care from the time the baby is born. However, there were girls who claimed that doing everyday child care tasks by fathers is not necessary unless the wife needs a help:

"I don't think that the father should participate in child care tasks when the child is very small. At least I will not request it from him. If he does so, he might do it for the sake of helping the wife. However, the father should know important facts about his child, and be there while the child takes the first steps, says his/her first words and does something for the first time".

However, young female participants mainly did not agree with this opinion. They argued that a father should be involved from the early stages of infant's life. For example one girl explained:

"They don't know their children because they don't participate in child upbringing. If the father is not engaged in child's life from the first days, he might not even feel that he is the father. I can say from my experience, only when the father is engaged from the very start he is able to have a healthy relationship with his offspring".

Going back to fathers' narratives, they often recognized that at the beginning of their fathering experience, it was hard for them to perceive their parenting duties. Specifically, they expressed that although they felt a higher responsibility to provide for their families, it was still hard for them to thoroughly understand the "state" of being a father. Only after interacting and establishing a communication with their children were they beginning to perceive their roles better. Thus, it can be assumed that because men are not engaged in child care from the beginning, it is hard for them to perceive oneself as a parent. As stated by one male FGD participant *"father's importance increases when social factors arise in child's life"*.

All in all, considering the feedback of fathers in combination with focus group discussions, the majority of men agreed that fathers' early involvement is not necessary for the child's development. They believed that caregiving is mother's obligation. However, one of the male partakers from the FGDs expressed the opposite opinion. According to him:

“Fathers in Georgia are emotionally far from children because they are not engaged from the beginning. If one has never stayed awake during the night, never knew what kind of food the child needs, his hands never got tired of holding the baby and if he has never cared it, how can he feel that he is the father and the parent?”

And indeed, studies discussed in the literature review demonstrate that most of the Scandinavian fathers participated in child care from childbirth. Their high involvement level in turn helped them to better understand their parenting roles and duties. This is well illustrated in the Johansson’s study (2011) where Swedish men indicated that doing child care tasks were their primary a parenting responsibility, rather than helping the partner.

7.3 Young People’s Perceptions on Gender Roles and the Importance of having both Parents

During the FGDs I posed a question about the role of mother and father, and whether they had an equal importance in child’s development. While doing so, the discussions often revolved around the feminine and masculine features of men and women. Almost everyone agreed that mother and father played separate and unique parts in children’s life, and their contributions aren’t interchangeable. The reasoning behind this was different personal traits and gender obligations of male and female.

Generally, all the participants agreed that the child should have both parents. However, more than half of the representatives of both FGDs were raised by single mothers. More importantly, participants expressed that not having a father is a bigger tragedy for a boy than for a girl. This is because a boy needs a male role model.

For the sake of a better illustration of FGD members’ points of view, I will discuss a case which happened during one of the FGDs. As mentioned before, all the FGD participants were unmarried and without children, except one young man who was a father. According to his opinion, father’s role in child’s life is irreplaceable, especially for a boy. He supported his opinion by recalling the following case:

“My child was playing ball in the playground. Then older children came and took away the ball from him. When I saw this, it was very unpleasant for me. I went to them and told them to play together with my son if they wanted the ball. In that moment my son did not express any

emotion, although later he started boasting that he has a strong and great daddy. What will a mother do in the same case? - Probably she will simply ask him to come home and avoid the conflict. Alternatively, she would also go down in the playground to protect his son, which I believe would be more shameful. It is considered reprehensible when a woman is involved in boy's arguments or quarrels. A mother can't replace father's role, because we live in the society where women's and men's roles are strictly defined, and violation of such norms is often considered disgraceful in the society".

As is evident from this example, young people were also aware of the existing gender norms and didn't seem to argue against them. On the contrary, they usually expressed the necessity to follow the gender guidelines to avoid social judgment and non-acceptance. When discussing this particular case, other participants also supported the opinion that if the mother had done the same, it would be considered shameful. Moreover, other children would have made fun of the child because *"his mom went to protect him"*. Another male participant added:

"In this case mother could solve the problem by talking with older boys and the child could have his ball back, though children would have laughed at him. So, kids need to be adjusted to social norms and to do so, having a father is critical".

In general, almost everyone agreed that mother's roles can't be undertaken by a father and vice versa. Moreover, participants agreed that in boy's life father is important, while having a mother is more crucial for girls. They supported their ideas by saying that daughter and son need role models. Participants often brought up different cases where a boy was raised in the surroundings of women, and how it resulted in him being much more feminine. However, some girls voiced their opinion that not only boys need a role model in the face of a *"strong and capable daddy"*, but girls as well. One of them stated:

"For a girl her father is a first person of the opposite gender in her life, from whom she learns the image of a man. So, in cases when a girl doesn't have a father, they have incomprehensive "picture" of a man".

While discussing gender roles in relation to parenting contribution, participants also expressed their opinions about homosexual couples. Especially male participants firmly stated that because the child requires a "standard" image of man and woman in the face of their parents, it is impossible that homosexuals can raise "normal" children. One of the men stated:

“Homosexuals represent a destroyed image of man and woman. There are some things in life which make man as a man and woman as a woman. In case of homosexuals, they have neither masculine nor feminine traits”.

Another male participant added:

“I feel sorry for the child who is raised by homosexuals because other children will make fun of him.”

FGD’s participants were thus quite aware of the social requirements towards men and women. They clearly stated that for someone to be accepted in the society they need to fit in the social standards. In addition to this, some of the girls expressed that they often felt that society is less strict towards boys compared to girls. For example, one of the female participants said:

“I remember that it was shocking for me when while in school I realized that boys have more freedom in behavior than girls. They are not punished for bad behavior. Maybe it is expected from them. I was trying to develop masculine traits to be as respected as boys. I mean that boys are never punished for fighting, even not studying is more acceptable compared to us, girls. If we do the same, we are more strictly judged by the society.”

As a reply to the aforementioned opinion, one of the male participant stated that in Georgian society the aggressive endeavor is the indication of man’s masculinity, while the same behavior is considered shameful for women.

The household labor division within the family was also discussed in the FGDs. In this case, similar to most of the fathers, the youth also supported the traditional idea of household tasks division. Male participants mainly thought that a man should fix broken objects, buy groceries and help children with their homework in “technical” subjects. They often supported their opinion by arguing that they do things which they are good at. Although female participants seemed to have a slight opposition regarding such division, they still agreed that they preferred doing it themselves, as they think they do it better. In addition to this, participants recognized that doing household labor is still somehow considered as a shameful activity for men. For instance, according to one male participant:

“It is not shameful for me, but other men think so. Most men will avoid doing such things unless the wife asks them to do so.”

In conclusion, participants of both FGDs had clear ideas about gender roles and their importance in the society. They also were quite vocal about the fact that father's and mother's roles are not interchangeable. This perception was very common in both generations of fathers too. It is also visible that participants were not blindly following socially set gender rules; on the contrary, they often highlighted the fact that it is the society that requires such behavior from individuals. Being recognized in the society appeared to be of great importance for young people. According to the social cognitive theory on gender identity development, individuals learn from an early age that performing gender appropriate acts lead to social acceptance; understanding gender by reflecting on social feedback is coined as an *Enactive experience* (Bussey 2011, see theory chapter). In case of violation of those socially established gender guidelines, one may face strict social judgment (West and Zimmerman 1987). In relevance to this issue, Bussey also indicates that males and females receive different verdicts for performing the same activities. Therefore, already in the early childhood, children have the anticipation of specific social outcomes about their behaviors (Bussey & Bandura, 1992 in Bussey 2011).

7.3 Youth's Experiences with Fathers

As stated in the theory chapter, "To most people, being a man or a woman is above all a matter of personal experience. It is something involved in the way we grow up, the way we conduct family life and sexual relationships, the way we present ourselves in everyday situations, and the way we see ourselves" (Connell 2009: 94). As personal experience plays an important role in forming gender stereotypes and shaping gender identity, I explored young people's life experiences and their relationships with their own fathers.

During both FGDs, participants were asked to share their experiences and feelings towards their fathers. Their experiences were of particular interest to me, as my intention was to find out the link between participants' experiences and their images of a good father. For some of the partakers this became an emotional part of the FGD, especially in case of boys. It is important to note that, the parents of the majority of participants were divorced. In reference to this, divorce statistics in Georgia show a rapid increase during the last ten years. According to National Statistics Office of Georgia, in 2001 the number of divorces was 1987, whereas in 2014 it has grown up to 9119, out of which 3346 were registered in the capital.

While interviewing fathers, I asked all of them what they considered to be the traits of a good father. Mainly their answers included being a provider, giving the right education, directing children to the right path or just supporting them. But what do children/young people want from their parents? Or what do they remember in the end? Considering the accounts of young participants, none of them has stated that they needed a father who will enable them to have good food, clothes or nice education. However, judging from my findings, young people want fathers who can simply spend time with them. I assume that while being a child or a teenager, one is not in the position to evaluate family's financial requirements and their importance; and while fathers are busy with obtaining financial sources to support their children, the emotional distance tends to grow between them. FGDs clearly demonstrate that majority of interviewees lacked fathers' involvement and attention. To understand young people's desires and needs from their fathers some of the personal stories will be shared below.

25 year old male participant - parents are still together.

“My father has a very passive personality; we used to have numerous conflicts. I was crying and asking him to take me for a walk. I remember, he took me for fishing only once, and it was only because my mother was asking him to do it for three days straight, but I remember it as a happy experience. He was the only child of his parents and thus very unsocial. I was angry when I was comparing him to my cousin's father who was a friend for his son, taking him everywhere – for hunting, for a walk. My dad was in a good economical shape, I would not say he was very busy either, as he owned a factory and did not have to work 8 hours per day. Everything was done by my mother in our family. He did not have this desire to make me feel good and do something that made me happy. The only thing I learned from him was what kind of father I should not be. He is a good example of a bad father. And perhaps, it has something to do with the generational differences.”

30 year old male participant – parents are still together

“Before the age of 4-5 my father had a very friendly relationship towards me. Then he had personal problems, as he was unemployed for some time, and my mother was the financial provider. He has changed a lot. When I had conflicts he was never there to give me support, he just dragged me out. I wanted him to stand by me and support me. Also, he had problems

with my mother, and I was thinking that if he ever touches my mom or me I will hit him. However, when he did so and hit me, I did nothing, as I could not imagine hitting my own father. For a boy, the father plays a significant role and in fact it is necessary to have him around. There was a time when I had to leave the country, and when I was alone I only wanted to talk with him, to share my troubles and success; I was so happy that he was simply listening to me. But then, when I came back, I was 26, and I was arrested for some time. On the day when I was set free he met me and instead of support he called me awful names; I needed his support in the first place. Now I think that he is a horrible person and not a man. I try to be the opposite of him and to support my children in everything.”

Female participant 24 years old – parents are still together

“My father was always working and he was coming home exhausted. Thus, he wanted silence and comfort at home. I and my sister were warned to remain quiet when father was coming home. As a person, he was an introvert, the only child of his parents, almost never talked, constantly wore official outfit and was always tired. Due to these reasons until certain age we did not have any relationship at all. Then, when I grew up and could talk about politics, physics or economics, we found some stuff in common. I would say he was representing the role of a professional man, rather than that of a father.”

As one can see, the experiences I have illustrated are the cases where parents were not divorced. However, as these examples demonstrate cohabitation does not automatically guarantee close relationships between a father and a child. Although in these cases fathers were still responsible for their children’s financial security; the situation becomes much more unstable in divorced families. In case of separated parents, according to young people’s stories, fathers hardly demonstrated any care, even in terms of breadwinning.

26 year old male participant – parents separated

“When my parents separated my dad was meeting with me only when he was in the mood to do so. When I was 15 years old, I became close with his children from his second wife. I did not learn anything from him, except of - what kind of father I should not be. He did not even have a passive role in my life. However, he considers that he can give me advice. He is 50 years old, and now he wants to give advice to me, and it is already late, as I developed my own views.

I only wanted to have a father, at least to go and play football together sometimes. I see other children playing with their dads, I see my mother who is worried about his behavior, and not surprisingly I feel an aggression towards him.”

25 year old female participant – parents separated

“My parents divorced when I was six years old. Mainly I was growing up with my grandparents. My father was visiting from time to time to see me, usually during the weekend. We would go for a walk for an hour or two. His major role was breadwinning. He never felt what it means to have a child as he never participated in my upbringing. He was not a bad person, but he was a bad father”.

These examples demonstrate that fathers’ participation in children’s lives is often limited to breadwinning. However, providing financial security doesn’t seem to be appreciated by young people themselves. In the literature review, where I have presented White’s (1994) empirical findings, patterns appear to be similar. According to her study, interviewees stressed that their fathers were minimally involved in their lives while being too busy providing for the family. White notes that participants rarely highlighted gratefulness for ensuring their financial security. She mentions that participants appreciated close relationships with mothers, who were always by their sides and provided support for them; this was true in the case of young people too. Relying on their stories, they often compared their fathers’ behavior to other children’s parents, and it was especially disappointing for them to see other engaged dads when their fathers were too busy with work. While discussing men’s and women’s roles in families, participants seemed to have strong gender norms – women doing child care and domestic tasks, men financially supporting and “helping the wife” in case of need. However, when it comes to their experience, they stated that they didn’t see father’s breadwinning as an important contribution in their lives. Instead, they were longing for their dads’ attention. Thus, it was not surprising that participants who lacked father’s involvement in their lives claimed the engagement to be the most important determinant of a good father.

7.5 Final Discussions

In this chapter I have discussed young people's and mothers' feedback. It appeared that youth's opinions on gender norms don't seem to be more liberal compared with fathers'. The majority of young people, similar to fathers, agreed that domestic care and child upbringing is women's field of competence. They legitimized their reasons with reference to "essentialist" approach. In the literature review, I have stated three common presumptions of such an approach: 1) gender differences in parenting are biological 2) fathers' masculine form of parenting considerably improves developmental outcomes for children, especially for sons; and (3) fathers can nurture their children only in heterosexual marriage (Silverstein and Auerbach 1999 in Marsiglio & Pleck, 2005, p. 6). Young people seem to share all of them. Similar to Magaraggia's study on Italian men (2012) FGDs' participants also viewed child care as the natural instinct of women. Their different perceptions of parenting practices were based on biological differentiations between men and women, where female physiology (pregnancy, giving birth and breastfeeding) was given as a reason for their higher obligations in terms of child care. The majority of the male participants shared essentialists' second point too; stating that the presence of father's masculine identity is vital for sons. However, they also believed that father's engagement in child's life is not necessary until the age of five; that is until the child develops social skills. Many of female participants on the other hand, argued against it; they stated that fathers' early involvement not only fosters child's development, but helps fathers themselves in understanding their parenting role. As for the third point of essentialism, mainly male participants firmly stated that the child cannot develop sound gender identity in a homosexual marriage. As discussions illustrate, although boys had a more essentialist understanding of gender, the understanding of parenting roles and duties as naturally segregated by gender was evident also among female participants. While describing their childhood experiences with their parents, it was evident that most of the interviewees were raised in traditional families where father is a breadwinner and mother is a caregiver. If we analyze this in terms of social cognitive theory on gender identity development, we can say that young people's ideas on gender norms were influenced by their families' patriarchal norms.

Life experiences of young people and mothers indicate that fathers' primary responsibility in families is indeed limited to breadwinning. Fathers and husbands of my study participants can be placed in the category which Halrynjo (2009) calls "The career position" and men in this

category prioritize public life over the private one. Being in the “career position” was however perceived differently by young people and mothers. As we saw from the interviewees’ stories, they were longing for emotionally warm and involved fathers, who would spend time with them, and provision of financial security was never highlighted as a positive action. Although mothers appreciated their husbands’ breadwinner roles, similar to young people, they also longed for higher commitment and engagement in the relationships with their sons. This indicates that emotional distance exists between the relationship of fathers and children, especially in case of sons. As Magaraggia (2012) argues, hegemonic masculinity exists in the society and ideas about appropriate masculine behavior hinder the formation of emotional bonds between fathers and children. Thus, although mothers and young people expressed quite bold ideas on gender norms, they were yet yearning to see more involvement from their husbands, and from fathers in case of youth. And lastly, the experiences of the FGD participants, whose parents have been divorced, in combination with divorced mothers’ accounts, indicate that after separation fathers’ engagement is strictly limited; even in terms of breadwinning.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

As stated in the introduction, fathers' roles and duties have been altered several times throughout history. The literature review demonstrates that among various forms of fatherhood, the breadwinner model is yet the most prevalent parenting practice in many parts of the world. Studies in the Georgian context indicate that opinions about men's and women's explicit gender roles don't seem to differ between women, men, youth, or even different age groups. Despite relatively high employment rates among Georgian women, fathers' duties and practices don't seem to be revised. As we have seen from the literature review, Georgian studies hardly provide sufficient knowledge to understand such stagnation. Thus, in my research, I set out to explore Georgian fathers' opinions on their parenting roles and duties. With the aim of exploring the social change in Georgian community, I conducted 16 interviews with two generations of fathers. In addition to this, the study also elaborates on young people's and mothers' opinions of a "good father". For the purpose of analyzing my major findings, I have applied three relevant theoretical frameworks. "Doing Gender", "Social cognitive theory on identity development", and "Theory of masculinity" were deemed as most applicable. Apart from this, secondary data significantly assisted me in the process of analyzing my research findings.

8.1 Fathers', Mothers' and Youth's Opinions on Fatherhood

Connell (1987) notes that masculinity always stands in contrast to femininity. That is, the meaning of those two are obtained only in relation to each other. My empirical findings illustrate that fatherhood is also understood in relation to motherhood. Study participants often discussed fathers' roles in contrast to those of mothers. The majority of fathers, mothers, and young people, agreed that moms and dads have different and unique roles and responsibilities during child upbringing and one can't be replaced by another. West and Zimmerman (1987) assert that men and women are "held socially accountable" for displaying their gender appropriately. In line with this, my study participants also seemed to feel highly responsible

over their gender display. For men, breadwinning was one way of self-realization and feeling confident in their gender roles, although they struggled while fulfilling their provider duties. Despite the fact that many employed men complained about long working hours, it is still hard to attribute their low engagement level in child raising solely to this factor. My findings indicate that majority of men didn't perceive child care and domestic labor as their obligations. Their reasons for participation in household or care tasks was often limited to "helping the wife". According to their standpoint, everyone should do what they are good at. This given pattern was also present in case of young people, especially boys. A similar notion is illustrated in Magaraggia's (2012) study on Italian men. She notes that for Italian fathers interaction with infants was often understood as an act of helping the wife. According to her study, men found it difficult to perceive parenting duties in early stages of child's development. Additionally, Magaraggia (2012) notes that lack of communication at an early stage might cause incomprehension in father-child relationships at later stages. Examples of youth's personal experiences validate this argument. As discussed in chapter seven, the majority of FGDs participants' fathers were practicing the traditional provider role. This in turn has resulted in lack of communication and distance between kids and their fathers. Literature on "New fatherhood" demonstrates that fathers' early participation in child care has a positive outcome on their relationship with their offspring. It not only creates better bonds between them, but helps fathers to understand their parenting roles better. Interestingly, mothers' opinions indicate that they are satisfied with the given division of household labor. Similar to fathers, these women seem to share the existing patterns of gender norms. The studies in Georgian context, discussed in the literature review and in the introduction, validate my results. According to the opinion of 92% of study respondents, women should be occupied with the child upbringing and taking care of the house, rather than with their career (UNDP report, 2013). Most importantly, the same study illustrates that, the majority of women (51%) are satisfied with the existing child care and household labor division in the family.

The gender of a child also appeared to have a significant importance for fathers. According to them, this was due to the personal joy of transmitting masculine traits and "having common things", or in case of few elder men, to have a name successor. Preference to have a son was illustrated in several Georgian studies as well (see introduction and lit. review). The pattern is not limited to Georgian context only. According to White's (1994) and other studies quoted by her, fathers expressed different responsibilities for sons and daughters, where sons were given a higher importance. In case of my study participants, different upbringing strategies

were used on sons and daughters; girls were seen as fragile creatures, who need to be treated softly, whereas sons were seen in need of a harsher approach. Fathers assumed that such an approach will lead to the development of feminine features in girls and will promote masculine behavior in boys. They indeed were aware of the existing gender norms, and they explicitly argued on the importance of “man being a man” and “woman being a woman”. In other words, in addition to breadwinning they were also undertaking the duty of the gender role model (see introduction). As Ridgeway (2009) argues, gender stereotypes shape our behavior independently from the fact that we might be aware of their existence. She notes that, because we assume that there exist imprinted gender guidelines, we expect to be judged according to those stereotypes (Ridgeway 2009). Social cognitive theory on gender identity development highlights parents’ importance in forming child’s gender identity. According to this framework, children’s gender often defines parents’ attitudes towards them (Bussey 2011). Considering that fathers treat their children with a strictly divided gender differentiated approach, it is not surprising that young people displayed bold gender values as well. However, despite the fact that the majority of FGD participants didn’t express a more liberal viewpoint on gender roles, it was evident that they lacked fathers in their lives. Specifically, they highlighted that their dads were usually busy providing for the family; while their only desire was to “do things together”.

8.2 Fatherhood, Masculinity and Social Change

According to Connell (1995), hegemonic masculinity is the gender display which legitimates patriarchy and ensures men’s dominant position in the society (Connell 1995, p.77). As already demonstrated by the relevant literature, Georgian society still conforms to the patriarchal norms. The persistence of masculine ideas were particularly evident when describing “the good Georgian man”. Being able to support family financially, fighting, protecting women, and even drinking were named as the major attributions of a masculine nature. Despite the fact that men in both generations had sharply distinguished gender ideals, elder fathers seemed to be less explicit in terms of masculinity ideas and their views on a “good Georgian man” were often limited to general personality traits. In addition to this, fathers often seemed to pay particular attention to their son’s masculine habits. As say said, they have more in common with sons because they can teach them “manly” things. They often worried about their sons’ gender

identity development, which they wished to be strictly masculine. In addition to this, fathers directed their children to select certain activities based on their gender. Analyzed within the gender identity development conceptual framework, they used *Direct tuition* (Bussey 2011) in order to contribute to their child's "proper" gender identity formation. In case of my study participants, they often paid special attention to their sons' sport development; football in particular was seen as a masculine activity. However, fathers were often unable to express emotional warmth and care towards their boys. Male parents, especially elder ones, often regretted being strict and distant with their sons, in addition to not having enough time to spend with them. A similar pattern was illustrated in Magaraggia's (2012) study on Italian men. She argues that masculine ideas hinder the development of close relationships between father and child, or to put it in other way, development of "New fatherhood". According to her, *emotions, affectivity, and physical closeness* are the traits which are oppressed by the notions of hegemonic masculinity. This struggle between dominant masculine ideas and new fatherhood was obvious in case of youth too. As already mentioned in chapter seven, young people, similar to fathers, shared traditional masculine ideals. However, the ways they described their fathers were partly against such ideals. While they highlighted that their dads were usually busy with the breadwinning, at the same time they expressed sadness for the lack of fathers' involvement in their lives. Thus, as noted by Magaraggia (2012) there is a contradiction between practices, desires and social norms.

It can be argued that hegemonic masculinity persists in Georgian community. It indeed sets borders for fathering practices, where expressing emotions and closeness are seen as non-masculine. "New fatherhood" on the other hand, promotes intimate relationships between fathers and their children; it promotes not only fathers' engagement in child care activities, but initiates more emotional commitment. Despite their set gender stereotypes, young people and women expressed the urge for emotionally and physically involved fathers. Although there is still no space for fathers who change diapers and read nighttime stories, there is indeed a place for emotionally involved fathers, i.e. fathers, who will not be handicapped by hegemonic values to hug their sons and display more emotional commitment.

8.3 Recommendations

My findings demonstrated that Georgia is still ruled by patriarchal norms and practices. Women's high employment rates didn't seem to challenge men's participation in child care and domestic life. Fathers' main duty is still deemed to be breadwinning and their participation in domestic life is often limited to helping the spouse. These explicit gender norms are not only fathers' opinions. Mothers and young people also don't seem to argue against them. Therefore, I believe it is necessary to implement specific programs in order to raise awareness on gender issues and challenges of gender norms across the country. My findings also demonstrate that double burden for Georgian women is quite a common situation. Although they didn't seem to complain about it, I believe it is necessary educate people on gender topics, especially women. More importantly, fathers' participation in child care should be addressed. The one way of doing this is to demonstrate fathers' importance in children's life, while highlighting the significance of their early engagement. I believe this should be addressed primarily for the sake of children, as in Georgia they have an important value. Scandinavian examples illustrate that family policies can play a huge role in the process of implementing new fathering practices and in challenging masculine ideas. Thus, family policies and paternity leaves should also be adopted by the Georgian government.

As we already saw from the literature review, researches on fatherhood are very limited in Georgia. Although available studies illustrate men's passive involvement in their family lives, they don't provide men's explanations and reasons for it. Thus, further researches on fatherhood issues are necessary. In addition to this, since my study area was only focused on the capital city, I believe comparative researches describing fatherhood in rural and urban areas would give an important information in order to set priorities for future actions.

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