The Temporal Emotion Work of Motherhood: Homeschoolers' Strategies for Managing Time Shortage

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THE TEMPORAL EMOTION WORK OF MOTHERHOOD

Homeschoolers’ Strategies for Managing Time Shortage

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Drawing on fieldwork and in-depth interviews with homeschooling mothers in the Pacific Northwest, the author reveals several ways the temporal experience of motherhood was emotionally problematic. The intensive demands of homeschooling left them stressed and dissatisfied with the amount of time they had to pursue their own interests. Mothers tried to allocate their time differently to manage these feelings, yet their efforts were unsuccessful, which led them to become frustrated and resentful. To resolve these troublesome feelings, mothers resorted to manipulating their subjective experiences of time through a process the author calls “temporal emotion work.” In the conclusion, the author examines the theoretical confluence of emotions and temporality, suggesting that the dominant form of motherhood is culturally defined as a “time-sensitive identity” and that “temporal emotions” are unique tools in managing the emotional difficulties inherent in the trajectories of some identities.

Keywords: motherhood; emotions; time; identity; homeschooling

The idea of good mothering in the contemporary United States has generated a great deal of scholarly interest. Research has shown that the standards for mothering progressively escalated in the latter part of the
20th century, resulting in what Hays (1996) called the “ideology of intensive mothering.” According to this belief system, which dominates cultural definitions of good mothering, mothers must be the primary caregivers; regard their children as priceless; and use childrearing methods that are “child-centered, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing, labor-intensive, and financially expensive” (Hays 1996, 8). Subsequent research has demonstrated the tenacity of these beliefs across many different populations, showing that even though most mothers do not unquestionably accept the entire ideology—they recognize that the ideal is too stringent and requires an unattainable level of self-sacrifice—they are still strongly influenced by it and enact the ideal to varying degrees (see Blair-Loy 2003; Blum 1999; Bobel 2002; Garey 1999; Stone 2007; Walzer 1998). This article is about a group of mothers who practiced the self-sacrificial ideology of intensive mothering by homeschooling their children. Through fieldwork and in-depth interviews with homeschoolers in the Pacific Northwest, I show how the intensive demands of homeschooling left mothers with no time to pursue their own interests. This lack of “me-time,” as mothers called it, led them to become dissatisfied and overwhelmed, feelings they tried to resolve by allocating their time differently. These objective time-use strategies did not work, however, and mothers’ feelings escalated to frustration and resentment. They ultimately resorted to managing these emotions subjectively, by manipulating their experiences of time.

Research has shown that homeschooling is not a monolithic movement. Mayberry and her colleagues (1995) report that homeschoolers are from all races (though typically white), socioeconomic statuses (though usually middle class and above), and hold a variety of religious orientations (though most often evangelical or mainstream Protestant). Although many parents are the sole teachers to their children, many use other resources, such as sending them to public school for a few courses, hiring tutors, joining co-ops, and enrolling in distance-learning courses (see Collom 2005; Mayberry et al. 1995; Stevens 2001). The homeschooling population is much more homogeneous, however, in gendered family structure. Homeschooling is almost always performed by at-home mothers in two-parent, heterosexual families with a father serving as the single wage-earner in the paid labor force (Mayberry et al. 1995; Stevens 2001).

Yet despite this widespread pattern, very little research has focused on the gendered family dynamics of homeschooling, particularly on the increased labor mothers take on when children’s schooling is brought into the home. There are some notable exceptions. My own work (Lois 2006), for example, highlights how homeschooling increases mothers’ burdens in the home and
in many cases leads to emotional burnout. Some homeschoolers overcome burnout by reprioritizing their roles and soliciting husbands’ contributions, whereas others continue to do all the work themselves or quit homeschooling entirely. In his research on homeschooling, Stevens (2001) discussed the increased domestic labor mothers assume, linking it to their identities as mothers and women. Homeschoolers may embrace their expanded responsibilities, he asserts, because it allows them to be more than “just moms”; it provides them with a “renovated domesticity—a full-time motherhood made richer by the tasks of teaching, and some of the status that goes along with it” (2001, 83). Though both of these studies show how much time homeschooling mothers devote to their children and how they reorganize their lives to juggle all of their responsibilities, they do not address how mothers’ personal time is affected. The homeschoolers I studied, even those who reported they had found ways to do it all, talked a great deal about their lack of discretionary time. As I explored this issue, it became clear that homeschoolers thought about time in complex ways, which shaped their identities as mothers.

Scholars have approached the issue of mothers’ time in two distinct but related ways. One can be found in the literature on the gendered division of labor in the home. Many studies have quantitatively examined the “second shift” (Hochschild 1989) of household work that women perform relative to their male partners, finding that, in general, women do between two and three times more housework and childcare than men, though women have redistributed their efforts in recent decades (Coltrane 2000). In analyzing the period from 1965 to 2000, Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie (2006, 92) found that as married mothers have dramatically increased their participation in the paid labor force, they have (not surprisingly) decreased the time they spend on housework; in fact, they seem to have “swapped paid work for housework almost hour for hour”; and since men have not substantially increased their household labor, less housework is getting done.

Though participation in the paid labor force has pulled women away from housework, it has not pulled them away from their children. On the contrary, contemporary parents—particularly mothers—spend more time with their children than in earlier decades. Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie (2006) show that both mothers and fathers have accomplished this by multitasking and including children in their own leisure activities. Yet unlike fathers, mothers have also sacrificed their leisure time, experiencing a significant decline in “pure free time” (time “uncontaminated” by family caregiving) and “child-free time” (with or without other adults), whereas fathers’ free time has remained stable over the same period. Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie posit
that the ideology of intensive mothering is at work here, driving employed mothers to sacrifice their own interests for their children. Indeed, their data show that employed mothers have 15 fewer hours of free time per week than their nonemployed counterparts and that they are still more likely than fathers to feel they do not have enough time with their children, despite spending more hours with them. This body of research demonstrates that mothers’ lost discretionary time is an important factor in sustaining gender inequality in heterosexual families and in triggering problematic emotions, such as anger and resentment, toward husbands (Coltrane 2000; Hochschild 1989; Webber and Williams 2008b).

Mothers’ time has also been thoroughly addressed in a related literature: the work-family quandary that affects most mothers in the contemporary United States. Much of this research has been qualitative, focusing on how mothers deal with the opposing pulls of sacrificing for their children (often defined as being at home full-time) and honoring their own identities (often seen as pursuing a career in the paid labor force). According to numerous studies, and consistent with Hays’s (1996) formula for intensive mothering, good mothers must sacrifice to “be there” (Garey 1999; Snyder 2007) physically and emotionally for their children. Although nonemployed and employed mothers demonstrate their sacrifice in different ways—a common focus in the mothering research (see Blair-Loy 2003; Blum 1999; Bobel 2002; Garey 1999; Hays 1996; Lois 2009; Stone 2007; Walzer 1998; Webber and Williams 2008a, 2008b)—most mothers, regardless of employment status, understand that sacrifice is an integral part of the cultural definition of mothering, and they use it, both instrumentally and rhetorically, to construct their good mother identities. Yet the research also shows that most mothers feel intense pressure on their identities and, thus, are highly conflicted about the absolute sacrifice of motherhood (which contradicts ideologies about how to be a productive and contributing member of society—see Blair-Loy 2003; Hays 1996); mothers seriously question the self-abnegation that ideal motherhood prescribes yet concurrently experience negative emotions, such as intense guilt, for considering meeting some of their own needs before their children’s (Blair-Loy 2003; Garey 1999; Hays 1996; Stone 2007; Webber and Williams 2008a).

These two bodies of literature on mothers’ time focus most intensely on the specific problem of its scarcity and mothers’ attempts at solutions, which revolve around objectively apportioning their time: They cut back to part-time work (Blair-Loy 2003; Garey 1999; Webber and Williams 2008a, 2008b), leave the paid labor force entirely (Blair-Loy 2003; Bobel 2002; Stone 2007), solicit domestic labor from their husbands (Hochschild 1989; Walzer 1998; Webber and Williams 2008b), and combine chores with childcare or their own leisure with their children’s (Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie 2006).
Few studies have addressed the role of mothers’ subjective definitions of time. Garey’s (1999) and Bobel’s (2002) works are exceptions; the mothers they studied carved out acceptable identities for themselves by redefining time over the life course, a strategy they both call “sequencing.” When mothers sequence, they compartmentalize phases in their lives according to children’s development, accepting that when their children are young, they will sacrifice a great deal, although their sacrifice will attenuate as children age and become more independent. Thus, the time mothers believe they should devote to mothering is intricately tied to the culturally accepted milestones of children’s physical, social, and emotional development (Garey 1999). Through sequencing, mothers assure themselves that they indeed “can have it all, but not all at once” (Bobel 2002, 24). Both Garey and Bobel clearly demonstrate that sequencing can help mothers deal effectively with the temporal tensions of intensive mothering, but they are less precise when discussing why it works. Though both analyses imply that sequencing helps mothers deal with the guilt, stress, and anxiety that may arise from the ways they use their time, neither engages emotions specifically to reveal exactly how these problematic feelings are assuaged when mothers redefine time through sequencing.

It is clear from the mothering research that time and emotions are highly salient features of mothers’ identities and, furthermore, that these two concepts are intricately connected. Yet the existing research has neglected to explore the temporal and emotional angles of mothers’ identities theoretically. Furthermore, though studies reveal that good mothering—defining it, doing it, reflecting on it—is a deeply emotional activity, most do not make emotion a central feature of the analysis, taking for granted the emotional turmoil of motherhood, leaving the variety of problematic emotions unspecified, and glossing over the particular techniques mothers use to “manage” (Hochschild 1983) them. Emotions are important links to identity because people do not simply manage emotions; they manage “self-in-emotion” (Hochschild 1983). If emotions such as guilt, resentment, and selfishness are so central to maternal identity (see Lois 2009; Taylor 1995), studies of motherhood must engage them theoretically.

This article uncovers some of the links between time, emotions, and mothering to show that, for homeschoolers, the temporal experience of motherhood was emotionally problematic. The intensive demands of homeschooling left mothers with no discretionary time, which led to problematic emotions that had to be managed. Mothers first tried to allocate their time differently to carve out space in their schedules for themselves, but these quantitative time-use strategies were ineffective. Thus, mothers resorted to managing their feelings by manipulating their subjective experiences of time, a process I call “temporal emotion work.”
DATA AND METHODS

In 2000 I moved to “Springfield” (pseudonyms used throughout), a county in the Pacific Northwest with more than 120,000 residents, half of whom lived in one small city, the other half in smaller towns and outlying rural areas. I immediately noticed that homeschooling was common, although the public school districts were adequately ranked in the state and geographically accessible to most residents. I wondered why parents would keep their children out of conventional schools and how this affected their lives. Since I was not a homeschooler, but wanted to gain the “intimate familiarity” (Blumer 1969) I would need to answer these questions, I decided to conduct field research on and take an “active membership role” (Adler and Adler 1987) in the homeschooling subculture. I began by attending a monthly support group that was open to the public, which I call the “Parents Association for Teaching at Home” (PATH). The group’s purpose was for parents to share curricular ideas, vent stresses, solve common problems, as well as gain academic, legal, and social information about homeschooling.

I declared my research interests and non-homeschooling status early to PATH leaders, as well as to homeschoolers when it came up in conversations. At one well-attended meeting, I was given permission to introduce myself, discuss my research interests, and solicit interviews. None of the 100 or so attendees objected, and several mothers approached me afterward to express interest in talking to me further. Though my status as a non-homeschooler was clear and seemed acceptable to the people at that meeting, there were other meetings where members probably assumed I was a fellow homeschooling parent (I fit the age, race, and gender profile, so I blended in). PATH was not tight-knit; different members attended each time and only constituted a small proportion of the large membership. Indeed, PATH had more than 600 member families, setting Springfield’s homeschooling rate at more than twice the national average.²

Although homeschoolers were overrepresented in Springfield, PATH members’ demographic characteristics were quite similar to what the most representative studies have shown (see Mayberry et al. 1995; Ray 2000; Wagenaar 1997). Almost every PATH family was white, intact, and heterosexual. Most were middle class, although their income levels ranged from poor to very affluent. The PATH meetings, held one night a month in a middle school gym, were populated mostly by women since mothers were overwhelmingly in charge of the homeschooling. Meeting activities varied but included question-and-answer panels, small-group discussions, famous guest speakers, and informal curriculum displays. Participant numbers waxed and waned—some meetings drew hundreds while others drew only a few dozen.
Though PATH was open to all, regardless of religious beliefs, evangelical Christianity was often salient in the meetings, mostly through attendees’ comments and questions.

Our state’s homeschooling laws are relatively liberal, requiring only one of the following conditions: a certified teacher must meet with the child weekly, the schooling parent has at least one year of college, or that parent had taken a 15-hour homeschooling course offered at the community college. Most parents I talked to had college degrees, though many took the 15-hour course anyway. I initially met few who opted solely for the weekly teacher visit, though I met more later as public schools developed liaison programs for homeschoolers.

For four years I took detailed field notes of the monthly PATH meetings and three statewide homeschooling conventions that I attended. I also conducted 24 in-depth interviews in 2002 (via convenience, snowball, and theoretical sampling) with homeschooling parents about their experiences, focusing the questions around the topics of education, homeschooling, parenting, and family. I collected data from other sources as well: PATH’s monthly newsletter and listserv, several audio-taped sessions from conventions I did not attend, two prominent homeschooling magazines, and an occasional newspaper article or National Public Radio report. In 2008 and 2009, I conducted follow-up interviews with 16 of the mothers.

The characteristics of my interviewees were also fairly consistent with larger research samples of homeschoolers (see Mayberry et al. 1995; Ray 2000; Wagenaar 1997). Twenty of the 24 identified with a Christian-based religion, and among those, 14 held highly conservative and evangelical Christian beliefs. Four interviewees told me they were not at all religious. Twenty-one of the families were white, two were Hispanic American, and one was African American. Parents’ ages ranged from late 20s to early 50s, with most in their mid-30s to early 40s. All interviewees were women, although four husbands participated in their wives’ interviews. They homeschooled (presently or previously) between one and 12 children (average 3.2), and their years of experience at the initial interview ranged from one to 17 (average 6.3). Most families were middle class, although a few were working- and upper-middle class. One subject was single, but engaged; one was widowed and homeschooled her grandson, whose father was single; all others were married. Most held four-year college degrees; two worked outside the home (the single mother worked part-time while her son attended a homeschool co-op; the other worked nights and weekends).

My interviewees participated in the homeschooling subculture in different ways, but all had an integral understanding of its norms and values. Ten of the 24 were actively involved in the monthly PATH meetings, attending
regularly to engage in discussion, gain advice, and network with other mothers. Seven interviewees participated more passively in PATH. Though they received the newsletters, were on the e-mail listserv, and visited PATH’s website, they rarely attended the monthly meetings, either because they were veterans and no longer needed guidance or because they eschewed the evangelical undertones. Seven of the 24 lived in two neighboring counties and had enrolled their children in homeschooling liaison programs (sponsored by the public school districts). Their children attended one or two classes with other homeschoolers for several hours a week and did the rest of their schooling at home. Most of these mothers also spent time with other homeschooling families (whom they often met through their churches). Despite the variety of ways my interviewees interacted with other homeschoolers, all of them regularly visited homeschooling websites for curricular advice and moral support, which effectively socialized them to the prevailing norms of the homeschooling subculture in the United States.

As I collected data, patterns emerged around salient topics, or “sensitizing concepts” (Blumer 1969), such as mothers’ identities and their lack of personal time. I kept these concepts in mind as I collected more data, further probing homeschoolers to flesh out the richness and intricacy of the experience. I formulated tentative theories to explain the patterns that emerged; some new data supported my developing analysis and some refuted it, progressively helping me revise my conceptual framework. I continued until no new patterns emerged from the data, a stage in data analysis that Glaser and Strauss (1967) term “theoretical saturation.”

**HOMESCHOOLERS’ STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING TIME SHORTAGE**

Homeschooling demanded so much from mothers that they often found themselves with no discretionary time. They had mixed feelings about this predicament. Though they were happy to live up to the ideals of good mothering by devoting a great deal of time to their children (indeed, this was frequently their main motivation for homeschooling; see Lois 2009), they also wished for what they called “me-time” to pursue their interests. The lack of personal time created a great deal of stress, which mothers tried to alleviate by managing their time—reserving a small quantity for themselves every week. This strategy inevitably failed, however, and mothers became frustrated and resentful. To alleviate (or prevent) these feelings, mothers turned instead to manipulating their subjective experiences of time.
Seeking Me-Time

Homeschoolers had “absolutely no time” for themselves because they were with their kids “24 hours a day, seven days a week” and were “devoting every particle” of themselves to their children. Homeschoolers were often exhausted and burned out, and they discussed this issue frequently at meetings, as well as in magazines, books, and on Internet websites and listservs. Though many mothers did find ways to balance the increase in domestic labor against the decrease in available time that homeschooling engendered, even the mothers who felt the most “role harmony” (see Lois 2006) still talked about lacking time for themselves. It seemed that these other responsibilities—childcare, housework, and homeschooling—trumped mothers’ personal time, which always got placed at (or pushed to) the bottom of their priority lists. I heard countless mothers say that they had put their “own life on hold” to homeschool their children. This refrain, an accepted truism in the subculture, not only reflected, but amplified, the sacrifice inherent in the ideology of intensive mothering; these homeschoolers were prepared to sacrifice themselves entirely for their children. In this respect, me-time was seen as a luxury among the mothers I talked to; it was the first thing to go and the hardest to recapture.

Yet even though homeschoolers treated time to themselves as expendable, every mother I talked to still expressed her desire for more of it—though some were more adamant than others about pursuing it. Although 71 percent of married mothers in the United States feel this way (Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie 2006), the desire for personal time was exacerbated for homeschoolers because they, often wistfully, compared themselves to mothers who sent their children to conventional schools, who “have freedom [and] time to themselves” to “have a clean house” or “have a job.” All of the mothers I spoke to acknowledged the importance of personal time, yet simultaneously, most felt guilty and selfish about taking it. Therefore, they framed any pursuit of me-time in selfless terms, saying things like, “If I don’t get myself filled, I can’t give anything back.” The cultural discourse of intensive mothering in the United States is rife with the ideal of self-sacrifice, and mothers often justify self-pursuits as in the best interests of their children (Hays 1996; see also Blair-Loy 2003; Garey 1999; Lois 2009). Homeschoolers did the same thing, but since they felt they sacrificed so much more than nonhomeschoolers, such rhetoric was even more effective in neutralizing their seemingly selfish desires for me-time. They could talk about wanting time to themselves because their choice to homeschool was additional confirmation that they were intensely and constantly committed to prioritizing their children’s needs over their own. Indeed, the act
itself—talking about having no time—was a way to draw attention to the sacrifices good mothers make and ratchet up the standards for good mothering (see Lois 2009; Stevens 2001).

A few mothers admitted they initially did not want to homeschool because they did not want to put their children’s interests permanently above their own. These mothers, few and far between in my sample, usually had children with special needs that could not be met in conventional schools and were far less wistful about their dearth of personal time. Darlene, a white, middle-class mother of two, wished for an acceptable alternative to homeschooling. Her 11-year-old son had Asperger’s syndrome, and though she had enrolled him in conventional school programs over the years, it never worked out; he was overwhelmed by the chaos of the classroom. Darlene explained how difficult it was for her:

I am trying to resign myself to the fact that I might have to [homeschool through high school]. This has been hard for me. It’s hard! It’s hard as a woman to give up your own dreams for a while. I mean they’re sort of put on hold to raise your kids.

Compared to most stay-at-home mothers in the United States, who devote a great deal of time to their children until they reach school age, Darlene’s life was going to be on hold an additional 12 years. This prospect caused her stress and frustration, emotions she avowed and tried to reconcile.

Personal time was such a big issue that most mothers spoke at length about how they had tried to carve it out throughout their homeschooling careers. Most homeschoolers used similar strategies, which they tended to employ progressively. Mothers first tried to get fathers involved with the homeschooling, especially with science and math (subjects stereotyped as masculine, therefore perhaps perceived as better suited for fathers). Mothers suggested fathers could study nature on a hike or complete a workbook assignment at the kitchen table. If fathers could commit to the same few hours every week, mothers thought they could arrange their personal time dependably without disrupting the schooling schedule. This strategy usually failed, however. Mothers reported that fathers “got too busy” or “forgot” to honor their commitments, and mothers had to pick up the slack. Even when fathers did pitch in, their work with the children often did not meet mothers’ standards. Liz, a white, middle-class mother who had homeschooled four children over the course of 20 years, had a typical story:

I tried to kind of force [my husband] into the science role with [our son]. The curriculum was all right there. . . . It told you exactly what to do on Monday,
what to do on Tuesday, what materials you needed a week in advance. But week after week after week he would get behind, and I was like, “Well, this isn’t working.” And it was a first-grade level, so it wasn’t anything hard, and he still wasn’t keeping up with it. [Since then] I have sometimes just said, “You need to give Mary her spelling test, and we need to go over this lesson in math with John.” And I’ll just say, “Do it,” and he’ll do it. But as far as preparing the class, as far as taking initiative, as far as saying, “What are you guys learning today?”—that’s not really there. In a pinch, if I hand it to him and say, “Do this,” he, for the most part, will do it. I can’t even tell you whether or not he’s happy about it, but he does it. So he’s capable, and he will do it if I put it on him, but that’s about as far as it goes.

Although some fathers were involved in the homeschooling, they were rare. Those who were unreliable and only halfheartedly invested in the homeschooling provided no relief; instead, mothers spent additional time catching up on the work or redoing it entirely. Liz was unwilling to lower her standards to gain personal time for herself because, in her view, that meant sacrificing the children’s education.3

Faced with this circumstance, mothers often lowered their expectations by asking fathers to commit to a reliable weekly schedule of childcare during which they could occupy the children any way they wanted. Yet again, things “came up” too often for fathers to keep the schedule, or they were reluctant to take on more parenting. Valerie, a white mother with seven children, found it was “very difficult” for her husband “to change.” She “nudged” him at first, “then it was like grinding the gears.” After a while, she gave up. Finally, mothers lowered their expectations once more, asking fathers to commit to being home in the evenings or early mornings while the children slept (see also Webber and Williams 2008b). Mothers found this the most dependable solution to schedule their personal time. They could go to the gym at 5:30 a.m. or, like a mother at a PATH meeting, a bookstore at night: “One night a week from 9:30-11:00 [after the kids are asleep], I go to Barnes and Noble and read or balance the checkbook. It’s my time!” Yet this form of fathers’ contribution—being on call for sleeping children—protected fathers’ own personal time too. Unlike mothers’ sacrifice, fathers served as warm bodies—“someone to get the kids out if there’s a fire,” as I wrote in my field notes—rather than as engaged parents or partners who sacrificed their own time to homeschool their children.

This difference in mothers’ and fathers’ time is an example of what Adam (1995) has called stay-at-home women’s “shadow time,” time that is devalued because it is “constituted as the shadows of the time economy of employment relations” and evaluated against the hegemonic conception of “the
commodified time of the market” (1995, 94). The value of “free time” can also be cast in these terms: It is only defined as such when it is “wrested from employers’ time” (1995, 96); therefore, free time ceases to be a meaningful category for those who operate in shadow time, such as stay-at-home mothers who feel that they are “on call twenty-four-hours a day” (1995, 95). Homeschooling parents seemed to apply these principles, protecting fathers’ free time while invalidating mothers’ claims to it. In the process, these families created meaning systems that prioritized workplace time over domestic time, which granted fathers (but not mothers) the privilege to choose their level of family involvement. Thus, mothers sacrificed their own time to shield fathers from domestic responsibilities and preserve marital harmony (a conflict I discuss in more detail elsewhere; see Lois 2006).

Though most fathers did cover increments of childcare time, their contributions were sporadic and unreliable. This left mothers searching for other methods of creating personal time that did not depend on their physical separation from the children. Veteran homeschoolers recommended that mothers merge their interests with their children’s (a trend now common among non-homeschooling parents as well; see Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie 2006). For example, one mother took piano lessons with her daughter; another integrated her love of cooking with her geography curriculum, exploring different cultures’ foods. Mothers felt less stagnant when learning new things, but redefining me-time to include anything interesting that they could do with their children was fairly restrictive.

Some mothers redefined me-time in the opposite way, including any time away from their children, regardless of what they were doing (as in balancing the checkbook at Barnes and Noble). Sarah, a white, middle-class mother of two girls, told me that she found time to herself by “getting errands done” when her children were at extracurricular activities. I asked her if grocery shopping was really time to herself, and she said,

Well, yes! It becomes that; it does. You just make those moments. For ages I resisted getting a dishwasher because I learned to love washing the dishes. Everybody knew, just stay out of the kitchen while Mom was doing the dishes. I’d have that 45 minutes to myself, and that was great!

Although being alone was a break Sarah enjoyed, when I pressed her, she admitted that she did not find doing the dishes to be self-fulfilling. Rather, her willingness to consider 45 minutes of household chores as personal time illustrates how homeschooling mothers redefined me-time and lowered their expectations accordingly.
Stories of fathers’ resistance were widespread among the mothers I interviewed, yet there was variation not only in the degree of resistance but also in mothers’ feelings about it. Conservative families (in my sample, highly religious) tended to have a more traditional gendered division of labor and less involvement by husbands. Contributions by husbands were slightly more common in the more gender-egalitarian families, though even these wives still reported encountering a good deal of resistance. Moreover, because egalitarian wives expected more, they were more dissatisfied than traditional wives who expected (and received) less support (see Hochschild 1989). Abby, a white mother of two children, identified as very liberal and politically progressive. She told me about her husband’s disinterest in homeschooling over the years:

I’ve often wondered why such a creative guy, who puts his creative energy into so many different things, hasn’t put it into homeschooling as much. Have you asked him? Oh, lots. He usually feels like a failure as a father when I talk to him about that. But you know, [I tell myself,] “it is what it is.” He’s so into homeschooling, it was his idea, mainly. He sees the validity and importance of it, but it’s mainly been my job. And I wish that were different. . . . But I guess I’m not frustrated about it right now.

Abby, like many mothers, had grown resigned to her husband’s lack of day-to-day involvement, despite his enthusiasm for the idea of homeschooling (enthusiasm that was clear to me when I talked to him on several occasions). Stevens (2001) found a similar dynamic among the homeschooling parents he interviewed. Fathers tended to talk more philosophically about the educational benefits of homeschooling (it was great in theory), whereas mothers focused more on the concrete challenges of conquering the workload (it was difficult in practice). The mothers I talked to expressed a great deal of frustration with fathers’ lack of contribution, but at some point, many, like Abby, shifted to grudging acceptance. They came to terms with putting their own lives on hold for prolonged periods to homeschool their children, but the ways they accomplished this shift is worth exploring further.

Doing Temporal Emotion Work

Mothers’ frustration could easily grow into resentment toward their husbands and even their children, whose demands prevented them from regularly scheduling even a small quantity of time for themselves. Since mothers’ attempts to manage their objective allocation of time did not alleviate these feelings, they turned instead to managing their subjective experiences of
time. Because homeschoolers’ problematic emotions were, at their core, time-related, mothers talked a great deal not only about trying to change their emotions, a process Hochschild (1983) has called “emotion work,” but also about trying to change their subjective experiences of time, a process Flaherty (2003) (drawing inspiration from Hochschild’s concept) has called “time work.” Homeschoolers did both of these things, at some times simultaneously, at other times reciprocally, because they found the temporal experience of motherhood to be emotionally problematic. As I sifted through mothers’ stories, it became clear that temporality was a crucial feature, not only in the ways they experienced their problematic emotions but also in their attempts to manage them. Therefore, I term this type of emotion work, the type that both shapes and is shaped by temporal concerns, temporal emotion work. To manage the emotional tensions that arose from their temporal experience, mothers used two types of temporal emotion work: sequencing and savoring.

**Sequencing: Eliciting Nostalgia and Anticipating Regret**

Sequencing, or the strategy of compartmentalizing phases of life according to children’s development, was a common way that homeschooling mothers performed temporal emotion work. Garey (1999) and Bobel (2002) both identify sequencing as a way for mothers to justify dedicating such a disproportionate amount of time to their children when they are young; it is acceptable because motherhood requires less sacrifice as children age and become more independent. In this sense, sequencing constitutes Flaherty’s idea of time work—it is a way to “promote or suppress a particular temporal experience” (2003, 19). When homeschooling mothers talked about the immense amount of time they devoted to their children, they often framed their explanations around this idea of sequencing. For example, some referred to motherhood as a “season,” a biblical reference that helped them reason, as Liz said, that “there is a time for everything. . . . There will be time for me later to pursue anything that interests me.” However, as I explored this issue further, it became clear that mothers’ ability to accept sequencing as a rationale to “table [their] own needs” (Bobel 2002, 7) hinged on particular types of emotion work, which was the essential link in developing and sustaining their willingness to sacrifice their interests over such a prolonged period. Therefore, I consider sequencing to be an example of temporal emotion work—one in which a temporal strategy (in this case, sequencing) depends on some form of emotion work.

Homeschooling mothers relied on two emotions to help them justify sequencing: nostalgia and regret. Specifically, they used these emotions to
transcend the present—to cross “timeframes” (Charmaz 1991)—into the past and the future. According to Davis (1979), nostalgia contains the dual facets of pleasure and pain—bittersweet feelings about happy times that, sadly, cannot be recaptured. Yet nostalgia is an emotion that contains a temporal component because it requires retrospection. Because of this emotional focus on the past, nostalgia was quite useful to homeschooling mothers in time- and emotion-related ways.

Whitney was a white working-class mother in her 50s who homeschooled her 11-year-old son for only one year. She lamented the passing of time:

You miss your baby. All those things they do and say, you cherish in your heart. I miss all that. . . . It’s almost like you want to take a bite out of [that moment] and savor it and never let it out. I wanted to inhale him when he was little—I was so in love with this child.

Like Whitney, many mothers looked back nostalgically to help them remember that the time with their children was fleeting and could not be recaptured. They then mapped their past experience onto the future and imagined someday looking back on the present with nostalgic feelings; the present would soon move permanently into the past. Becoming nostalgic, then, taught mothers that they should be aware of the progression of time. Whitney told me that for this reason, she was trying to consciously appreciate this one year of homeschooling by creating a select set of memories for the future:

This is a grand year. This is the one when we go out into the forest to chop down a Christmas tree together. My father goes, “Why don’t you just go to the store and buy one?” And I go, “Doesn’t create a memory, a lasting memory.” You know, everything we do together creates a legacy for my son to pass on to his children. . . . This will be the best year of our family’s life. This will be the year we all look back on and wish we could relive—other than his babyhood—[because] we’re all together.

Whitney’s idea of a worthy memory—chopping down the family’s tree instead of buying it at the store—may indicate, at least in part, that the meaning behind the memory would be unique and strong enough to elicit nostalgia in the future. Constructing particular types of memories in the present was a temporal strategy Whitney used that would allow her family to access the emotions of their special time together, which she knew was evaporating quickly. In this way, nostalgia (ironically) engendered a future-focused perspective that dampened mothers’ desire for time away, especially as they imagined the end of childhood approaching.
The process of evoking nostalgia to manage the temporal tensions of motherhood was also collectively encouraged; it was part of the homeschooling subculture and discourse. For example, veteran homeschoolers gave a great deal of nostalgia-related advice about how mothers with young children should handle the unrelenting demands of homeschooling. Judith, whose children were in college, sat on a panel at a homeschooling convention and advised mothers to “just relax and enjoy this time because now I wish it were back.” She went on to explain how, when her children were young, she desperately wished for the day when, because of the mess, their art projects required “no more glitter!” To demonstrate how misguided those feelings were, she reached into her purse and pulled out a small vial of glitter to show the audience. “I carry this around with me now to remind me of those times. I should have appreciated it more.” I talked to several mothers over the years who remembered that vial of glitter. Judith’s cautionary tale packed a powerful emotional punch.

Judith’s story also points to the second emotion mothers used to manage the temporal experience of homeschooling: regret. Regrets consists of negative feelings about one’s past actions (or lack thereof), along with the impossible wish to change them. Like nostalgia, regret allowed mothers to shift time frames—to get beyond the present—mining their past for instances they did not want to repeat in the future. They extrapolated these past negative experiences onto the future, and that gave them the willingness to continue sequencing—to do everything they could now to avoid regret later. Following this logic, taking time for themselves in the present meant taking it away from their children, a decision they feared they would regret in the future.

When homeschooling mothers felt deeply time-starved, adopting veterans’ warnings about future regret helped them marshal the emotional resources to continue sequencing. For example, recall that Darlene, whose son could not attend a conventional school because of his Asperger’s syndrome, was highly dissatisfied with how much homeschooling restricted her independence. Nevertheless, she ultimately justified it:

But [the kids] grow so fast. All these women who are successful in their fields have told me “If I had to do it over, I would have stayed home with my kids.” I’m like “Really?!” I mean these are women I admire, who are also feminist mentors for me—I’m like, “You would?” So I keep listening to those voices and saying [to myself], “Just relax and enjoy it.”

Darlene, a self-proclaimed feminist, struggled more than most of the mothers I spoke to, perhaps because she felt that homeschooling was not her preference but, rather, her last resort. Her biggest boost in mustering the
willingness to continue, however, came from her friends’ warnings about the unrelenting passage of time and the regret that would come from not appreciating it.

It is interesting to note that the advice Darlene tried to heed was to “just relax and enjoy it.” I heard numerous homeschoolers use this exact phrase (see Judith’s statement above), and it is a telling one with respect to emotions and time. The crux of this mantra targeted mothers’ problematic emotions, specifically their apparent inability to “relax” about putting their lives (to invoke another frequently used phrase) “on hold” to homeschool. Instead, they were advised to see their situation from a broader perspective, as Cassandra, a white, upper-middle-class mother of five, explained:

I’m going to be a little old lady someday, all alone with [my] memories. So I think about that. I don’t yearn for that day. I know it’s coming. I try to appreciate what we have now, because . . . it doesn’t last very long at all, in the great scheme of things.

Developing this broader perspective was a necessary temporal step to use sequencing as an emotional strategy.

Evoking nostalgia and anticipating future regret were emotion management strategies that mothers used to manipulate their temporal experience and, circularly, manage some of their problematic emotions such as frustration and resentment. Nostalgia and regret were the routes to crossing time frames into the past and future, an essential shift that enabled mothers to view their lives, children, and families in the “great scheme of things.” Thus, sequencing was an important form of temporal emotion work for mothers because it helped them transcend the present and transform the problematic emotions they felt there.

Savoring: Staying Present and Creating Quality Time

Once mothers did the temporal emotion work necessary to sequence, they then turned to a second type of temporal emotion work: savoring. On a temporal level, savoring is the opposite of sequencing. Whereas sequencing helped mothers shift to the past and future to gain a broader perspective on their mothering careers, savoring helped them stay in the here and now, narrowing their focus to become hyperaware of the present. On an emotional level, however, they were intricately connected: Savoring derived from sequencing. In the process of accepting sequencing as a strategy, mothers learned an emotional lesson: Their children’s childhoods were evaporating daily, and they would regret not making the most of this time. Even with its focus
on the past and future, sequencing rested on an assumption that the present was filled with precious emotional moments that should be experienced to the fullest because they would form the basis for families’ nostalgia in the future. Therefore, once mothers framed their pasts and futures by sequencing, they had to figure out a way to appreciate the moment. Savoring became the main form of temporal emotion work to deal with the ephemeral nature of the present.

Homeschoolers savored because they felt like time was speeding by. One mother told me that childhood “is so temporary. It really goes by so fast. How do you put the brakes on? Slow down!” Flaherty (1999) has noted that people experience the past as “temporally compressed.” In hindsight, time seems to have elapsed more quickly than when originally experienced, and because of episodic memory erosion, this effect is perpetually intensified as experiences continually recede further into the past. Contrarily, we achieve “protracted duration” (Flaherty 1999)—time slows—when we “increase the density of experience per standard temporal unit,” and we do this by tightly focusing our “attention on a particular aspect of self or situation” as it is happening (Flaherty 2003, 23; see also Flaherty 2011). Through doing so, we feel like more has happened—moments become “bloated with an awareness . . . that far exceeds what they contain under ordinary conditions” (1999, 95)—and this decelerates our experience of time. Homeschoolers did this type of time work. They consciously focused on the present, savoring each experience with their children, to decelerate their subjective experience of time and slow the inevitable progression of childhood. Savoring, then, is clearly a temporal strategy to prolong an experience. When homeschoolers discussed this type of time work, however, a distinct emotional component emerged. Savoring was not purely about achieving protracted duration but, rather, about doing so with the express purpose of sustaining and inflating pleasurable emotions in the moment.

Yet mothers also wanted more than just (the feeling of) a larger quantity of time with their children; they wanted to make the most of that time, so they focused on infusing it with “quality,” which meant increasing the emotional connection with their children through shared and unstructured experiences (a definition shared by non-homeschooling parents as well; see Snyder 2007). Homeschoolers believed that the home was the best place for these interactions, perhaps because much of children’s structured time occurs elsewhere (Lareau 2003). Countless mothers told me that their favorite part of homeschooling was “cuddling” or “snuggling” with their children, usually reading books on the couch, and still wearing their pajamas at lunchtime.

Not only did families need unstructured time together, but it had to be unencumbered by stress, which was especially hard for mothers with young
children. Gretchen, a white, middle-class mother of three young boys, ages eight, four, and two, explained how the stress of family life threatened to keep her from engaging with her children in the way she thought she should:

[Homeschooling] is stressful when you’re distracted—like if I’m trying to figure out, “Okay, how am I going to get the groceries, get home, answer this call, plan a meal?” . . . But they’re just there, all the time, with their questions and insights and riddles. . . . And it takes a lot to be able to go, “Oh my gosh, that’s clever! How did you think of that?” when you feel like saying “go be quiet somewhere.” . . . But [it’s important to be] engaged rather than being stuck in your own thoughts or distracted and being taken away from the kids. Just to be present in the moment. . . . You have to be available as a parent. You have to be willing to go the library [on a moment’s notice]—not just because it’s [preplanned] “library day”—but because we just saw this picture of a turtle on the beach in Mexico, and we need to know about turtles right now. Your time has to be open.

These two features of quality time—first, unstructured, open time that, second, leads to intentional engagement with children—were important because they set the stage for spontaneous connections. The quality of the time mothers spent with their children could not be forced—it had to happen naturally, a feature of mainstream definitions of quality time as well (see Snyder 2007). Mothers talked about being constantly on guard for opportunities that might arise, either for a “teachable moment” in their homeschooling or an instant when their children were open to emotional connection. Distraction and self-focus kept mothers from seizing these opportunities—moments that would disappear forever if they did not capitalize on them. Savoring, with its intense focus on the present and spontaneous emotional connection, served as a constant reminder of the ephemeral nature of childhood, which helped homeschooling mothers quell their desires for personal time and feel good about sacrificing it over long periods.

CONCLUSION

This article reveals two ways that the temporal experience of motherhood was emotionally problematic for homeschoolers. First, mothers had so little time to themselves that they felt a great deal of stress and dissatisfaction. Though they attempted to alleviate these feelings by trying to allocate their time differently—a quantitative solution—the demands of homeschooling and their husbands’ paltry contributions prevented them from reserving enough reliable me-time, which left them feeling frustrated and resentful.
Mothers’ attempts to manage these feelings, however, led them to focus on a second temporal tension: the idea that their children’s childhoods, and thus their own identities as intensive mothers, were evaporating daily; they were at the mercy of the unrelenting progression of time. This temporal realization led them to sequence and savor, qualitative strategies that capitalized on their anxiety about the impermanence of childhood and granted them not only the temporal ability to put their own lives on hold for prolonged periods but, importantly, the emotional ability to do so willingly. The ways homeschoolers used sequencing and savoring to reconcile the emotional and temporal tensions of intensive mothering are examples of a process I have called temporal emotion work.

One contribution of this research is that it uncovers some of the theoretical links between emotion work and temporality, not only by introducing the concept of temporal emotion work, but also by showing that it can be used as a tool in self-construction. Charmaz (1991) has shown that thinking about the “self in time” is an important part of identity. Her work with chronically ill people demonstrates that one way people use time is by anchoring the self in different timeframes—past, present, or future—defining their real selves as the person they were before their illness, the ill person they are in the present, or the person they will be once they go into their next cycle of remission. Charmaz weaves emotions into this analysis to show how ill people’s temporal conception of self has emotional consequences, implying that (in Flaherty’s terms) time work can be used to manage emotions as well as construct a sense of self in time. However, ill people’s particular emotion management techniques are not the central focus of Charmaz’s research, and thus she does not fully explore the role of emotions in crossing time frames. Other research, however, has highlighted emotions more directly to show how people link past and present to construct a continuous self over time. For example, Milligan (2003) has noted that nostalgia acts as an emotional bridge to help people who are experiencing “identity discontinuity” to transition to a new identity by allowing them to integrate emotions from the old one (see also Davis 1979). Although Milligan does not engage the literature on temporality, it is clear from her work that nostalgia can be used to do time work—to “promote or suppress a particular temporal experience” (Flaherty 2003, 19)—which in turn helps a person construct a stable sense of self over time.

My data confirm this role of nostalgia but also suggest that there are other specific emotions, such as regret, along with emotional processes, such as sequencing and savoring, that may aid in doing time work and constructing a continuous self over time. The emotions of nostalgia and regret were the route to other time frames, at least for homeschoolers, allowing mothers to
transcend the present and construct their past and future selves through the sequencing strategy. In this way, we see that emotion work can influence time work. My data also show, however, that the relationship is reciprocal: Time work can influence emotion work. Savoring was not only about slowing down time but about doing it so that mothers could elicit the positive emotions that increased their appreciation of the time they spent with their children.

Though these data are specific to homeschooling mothers’ experiences, they imply some “theoretical generalizability” (Glaser and Straus 1967) for the relationship between emotion work and time work. My research suggests that there may be a subclass of emotions, which I call temporal emotions, that can only be felt by crossing timeframes, and thus may be more useful (than nontemporal emotions) in constructing a continuous self over time. While all emotions can be felt in the present, remembered in the past, or anticipated in the future, there are a few—such as nostalgia, regret, disillusionment, ambition, hope, optimism, and dread—that cannot be felt without bridging the present to either the past or the future. For example, regret requires accessing memories from the past; dread depends on anticipating events in the future. These emotions contain an inherent temporal component—whenever they are felt, it is always relative to the past or future. As such, it is possible that the ways we use temporal emotions have a particularly important effect on constructing a continuous self over time. Although scholars have shown that past emotional experiences can be used as a template for understanding present emotions (e.g., Charmaz 1991; Mattley 2002), my research goes further, identifying the category of temporal emotions that require a person to transcend the present. Because accessing the past or imagining the future is a mandatory feature of feeling temporal emotions, it is possible that they have a greater effect on the construction of a continuous self over time than nontemporal emotions. If it is indeed true that people construct both a “self-in-emotion” (Hochschild 1983) as well as a “self-in-time” (Charmaz 1991), it stands to reason that temporal emotions would be particularly powerful tools that tie our experiences together as we try to construct a continuous emotional self: They allow us to perform time work and emotion work simultaneously and reciprocally, thereby lending more credence to our subjective experiences by giving our feelings continuity and durability, which may significantly contribute to an enduring sense of self.

The prevalence of temporal emotion work among homeschooling mothers leads to a second significant contribution of this research: that intensive motherhood may be what I will term a time-sensitive identity—an identity governed by the unrelenting progression of time—which is an aspect of intensive mothering that has yet to be fully explored. My research demonstrates that
homeschoolers’ ability to sequence and savor rested on the assumption that childhood (and by extension, motherhood) has a distinct end point: They believed they would cease being mothers—or at least a particular kind of mother—once their children reached adulthood. Previous research on more heterogeneous groups of mothers also supports this conclusion, showing that advice manuals and mothers themselves define mothering almost exclusively as it applies to dependent-aged children (see Bobel 2002; Garey 1999; Hays 1996). The dearth of literature (scholarly or popular) on mothering adult children is further evidence that our dominant definition of mothering—intensive mothering—has an expiration date, and this assumption affects mothers’ identities as they progress through the experience.

Yet we can extend this idea beyond the limits of the mothering career to speculate that a time-sensitive understanding of intensive mothering may shape women’s identities over the life course. Hamilton and Armstrong’s (2009) work, for example, gives empirical support for this idea. They show how the middle-class expectation for college women’s personal growth and individual achievement (the “self-development imperative”) conflicts with the gendered expectation that women should want to be in romantic relationships with men (the “relationship imperative”). One way the middle-class women in their study managed this tension was by staying out of committed relationships during the college years. Doing so allowed them to focus instead on the self-development imperative before getting into “greedy” relationships that would prevent them from pursuing their own interests. Though Hamilton and Armstrong’s point is to show that different strategies lead to a host of other conflicts and are influenced by social class, their work also reveals the ways anticipating the time-sensitive identity of intensive mothering may shape young women’s decisions in the premothering years. Indeed, one of their subjects articulated this well, saying that college was “the only time in your life when you should be a hundred percent selfish. . . . I have the rest of my life to devote to a husband or kids or my job . . . but right now, it’s my time” (2009, 602). The middle-class expectation that these heterosexual women held about their futures as intensive mothers shaped their identities years in advance—we could call it the “presequencing” phase—laying the emotional groundwork for the extreme self-effacement inherent in the middle-class expectation of intensive mothering. Thus, my research suggests that defining intensive mothering as time-sensitive may powerfully affect women’s identities across the life course. During the mothering years, it maintains the gender order in most heterosexual families by teaching mothers to suppress their frustration and resentment and to accept their subordinate positions.
relative to their husbands and children. Yet the idea may also be embedded in a variety of gender norms (such as those Hamilton and Armstrong identified), molding women’s identities along these emotional and temporal trajectories throughout other phases of their lives.

Although my data illustrate that intensive mothering is defined as time-sensitive among homeschooling mothers (and possibly among middle-class women more generally), they also, again, suggest some theoretical generalizability for other identities that have clear temporal boundaries. It is reasonable to speculate that the degree of control over when a particular identity is going to begin or end may significantly alter the experience. Specifically, lacking control over when one enters or exits an identity—that of college athlete or prisoner, for example—may intensify any problematic emotions associated with the shift. This intensification, which may spring directly from the lack of control over the temporal end points, could require additional emotion work. Indeed, Charmaz (1991, 251) has shown that for many chronically ill people, “feeling trapped by an uncontrollable future also traps [them] in a dialectic of negative emotions,” which in turn affects their identities. Contrarily, identities that have controllable end points (e.g., some volunteer positions or occupations, for example), though perhaps emotionally difficult in other ways, may be less sensitive to the emotional dynamics of starting, stopping, or progressing through them. Howard’s (2006) work with people who were “recovering” from a “disorder” gives empirical support for this idea, showing that when people intentionally disidentified with the label, wresting control over the identity and its limitations, they felt less “inner conflict.” This suggests that control over temporal boundaries may be one important factor in the degree of emotional turmoil brought about by identity shifts. Thus, it stands to reason that time-sensitive identities, because they strip the individual of control over entering and exiting, may require additional (and perhaps a different type of) emotion work than those with temporal boundaries that are easier to control.

This analysis of homeschooling mothers’ experiences not only shows several ways that the temporal experience of intensive mothering may be emotionally problematic, but it also suggests that what underlies the temporal and emotional tensions, at least in part, is a definition of childhood and, by extension, intensive mothering, as time-sensitive. This temporal assumption was the most salient feature in homeschooling mothers’ experiences and had the biggest impact on their identities. It drove the ways they interpreted their past, present, and future and, through temporal emotion work, helped them construct identities as good mothers over time. Although previous research...
has emphasized sacrifice (and its antithesis, selfishness) as the prominent theme in contemporary definitions of motherhood in the United States (see Blum 1999; Bobel 2002; Garey 1999; Hays 1996), my research suggests that underlying this drive to sacrifice, at least among homeschooling mothers, and possibly among other intensive mothers, are the problematic emotions that arise from defining intensive mothering as a time-sensitive identity.

NOTES

1. Though Blair-Loy’s (2003) work with women in elite careers uncovers the “moral and emotional” dimensions of choosing between work and family and the “profound emotion work” (2003, 90) they had to do to come to terms with their choice, Blair-Loy gives scant attention to the ways they accomplished it—something that Hochschild (1983, 1990) discussed in detail when developing the concept of emotion work.

2. According to U.S. Census data, the 600 PATH member-families constituted between 3 and 4 percent of the households with children under 18 years old in Springfield County. The U.S. Department of Education (see Lines 1998; National Household Education Surveys Program 2003, at http://nces.ed.gov/nhes/homeschool/) has estimated that between 1 and 2 percent of school-age children are homeschooled nationally; thus, it appeared that homeschooling in our county was indeed quite prevalent—at least twice the national rate, and probably much higher since most families homeschooled more than one child.

3. Moreover, when mothers strictly defined their identities according to the ideology of intensive mothering, which includes setting extreme childrearing standards and asserts that mothers’ caregiving is far superior to anyone else’s, fathers’ contributions to homeschooling could never measure up. Furthermore, allowing parenting practices that mothers viewed as substandard could threaten their own identities. (Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out.)

4. See Hochschild (1989) for discussion of this same dynamic in the household division of labor literature, which details the strategies some wives use to either reduce or escalate marital conflict when husbands, either intentionally or neglectfully, deny their bids for respect and gratitude.

5. Though this process has been shown to be a feature of how people generally experience time (see Flaherty 1999), it is possible that the effect was exacerbated for homeschooling mothers. It is reasonable to speculate that sequencing, with its heavy dependence on nostalgia and regret, led homeschoolers to experience the sensation of temporal compression more acutely than people who spend less time scrutinizing the past.

6. Flaherty (1999, 154) has suggested that the specific term “savoring complex” may well describe the temporal process of purposely trying to achieve protracted duration, though he has yet to develop this term more fully (see also Flaherty 2003; 2011). I borrow from him here in labeling this form of temporal emotion work as “savoring.”
REFERENCES


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