might use this strategy to find a new job. According to some studies, the most effective means of finding a new job is to utilize one's social network (Gimpelson and Magun, 1994; Granovetter, 1973). The significance of the social network in finding employment increases in the search for work of a higher status (Chernys, 1994).

Certain trends can be observed in the changes taking place in the labour market. The first is the growing mobility from one position to another, usually to one with a lower prestige. The second is the decrease in the supply of work in the state sector and the increase in the private sector. The third is the increase in the number of people starting to work at home, i.e. in the rate of hidden unemployment (Gimpelson and Magun, 1994). All these tendencies are, in the light of our findings, making women's work position more difficult, especially as the manifest unemployment rate is rising. Following a long period of unemployment, returning to work is becoming more difficult and the probability of falling to a lower level of vocational status is increasing. In addition, public debate and the prevailing attitudes are contributing to the transfer of women to the labour reserve - to looking after the home, children and the elderly. The legislation does not yet guarantee a pension and subsistence or other benefits for people working at home (see Zdravomyslova in this book). Nor is it clear how the problems of unemployed people in general should be solved. The position of women on the labour market and its development, and differences between the working positions of men and women do, in any case, require further, more detailed examination.

Finally, unemployment is not only a matter of income, although this is in many cases very important in the present transition period. From a more general point of view unemployment is a matter of losing one's autonomy, of weakening self-esteem and personal identity.

Problems of Becoming a Housewife

ELENA ZDRAVOMYSLOVA

This paper is based on the results of the research project 'Changes in the situation of women in Russia in the period of radical socio-economic reforms', carried out in 1992-1993 at the Centre for Independent Social Research in St. Petersburg. The research concerned the attitudes to work and gender stereotypes of women who had been forced out of the labour market after January 1992. Altogether, we conducted sixty-four (64) in-depth interviews with unemployed women of different ages, educational levels, work experience and family situation. The research was partly financed by the John and Cathrin McArthur Foundation.

Housewifery as a career is quite a new phenomenon in Russia. During socialist rule more than 90% of women were in paid employment, which was the largest percentage in the world. One important feature of the radical economic reform, started by the Russian government headed by Gaidar in January 1992, has been the feminization of unemployment. Among other consequences, this has created a new social position, that of the housewife.

Housewifery is an institution regulated by several societal norms.1 Like every totally new mass experience, its emergence brings about new problems in both the private and public spheres in Russia, with all the juridical, ethical and psychological implications. Let me begin by noting some of them:

Psychological problems. Mass female employment in Soviet Russia, which lasted about 70 years, has had a huge impact on socialization patterns and has
moulded stereotypical attitudes and behaviour among both women and men in the private and quasi-public sectors. The breakdown of such stereotypes is causing unemployed women to be frustrated and discontent, feelings that cannot be easily overcome, and which in many cases will not be overcome.

*Legal problems.* Russian society lacks ways of regulating the relationships in one-income families.2

*Cultural problems.* Even if legal and other institutional barriers to the acceptance of housewifery were removed, a major cultural problem would still exist. This problem is the failure to appreciate that housework is work in terms of the time and energy it involves (Oakley, 1991, p. 80). General under-estimation of housework is typical of Russian society today.3

In this article I will try to present the cultural, juridical and psychological problems caused by this emergent housewifery, as they were articulated by women who became housewives (whether through choice or circumstances) after 1992. Discourse analysis of in-depth interviews conducted with unemployed women helped to reconstruct the current paradoxes of gender stereotypes in Russia. My main assumption in this study is that Soviet gender culture is the basis of the problems associated with becoming a housewife for Russian women.

The text concentrates on the problems associated with housewifery for women belonging to different generations. One generation includes women of over 35 years old, who have had longer work experience (more than seven years). The second one consists of younger women who have not started their working career and who seem doomed to remain unemployed, or who have spent only a few years working in the socialist economy. These two groups of women have different images of their destiny, and different psychological problems with being unemployed.

Becoming a housewife for a woman with long work experience

One of the typical roads to unemployment (to becoming a housewife) travelled by a Russian woman with long work experience (over seven years) and with higher or secondary specialized education, is described below.

In 1993, Anna was a 42-year-old woman with an engineering education. She had worked as an economist for 26 years in one of the enterprises in Leningrad - St. Petersburg. Her job had almost nothing to do with her education. She did not like the work schedule, which forced her to arrive at her workplace sharp on time and to leave no earlier than at the end of the day. Anna worked in a ‘closed’ type of enterprise, which people could only enter with special permission. She had a husband and an 11-year-old son.

Soon after the onset of the economic reforms in 1992, Anna realized that her job was redundant. After some rationalization, she became unemployed. She had expected this dismissal. She knew that it would happen sooner or later, because her department had not had any orders for several months and she did not have anything to do. Her monthly salary was often delayed. Sometimes she was forced to take leave for days or weeks, because there was no money in the company cashier’s office.

By the time our heroine was dismissed, many employees who had been able to find better paid jobs had already left the enterprise. However, the women were largely among the last to leave. They did not take initiative, and although they earned almost nothing and suffered from so-called hidden unemployment, they still stayed in the same job, waiting for God knows what.

For a few days (this lasted months in some other cases) after her dismissal, Anna felt quite happy. She thought this was the time she had been dreaming of all her life. There was nowhere to hurry to in the morning, there was enough time for urgent and delayed household duties. Like many Russian women, she thought that she would be happy as a housewife. Her husband was working and earning enough money. He wanted his wife to stay at home and to take care of the household and their son.

However, soon after this long-awaited dream came true, the ‘fresh housewife’ reformulated her gender ideology.

After one (or more) months of joblessness, she began to suffer from acute psychological stress. According to our research, the longer the working experience, the more painful are the feelings of the newly unemployed woman.

The image of housewifery for our heroine had been "somewhat like an abstraction... like homesickness for your fatherland. You cannot tell whether you will suffer from it or not before you leave your native country". Recalling her psychological state soon after dismissal, Anna observed:

"What were my feelings after my dismissal? Stress. Absolute disaster. I did not recover for a very long time. (...) If you work for more than 20 years at a stretch, and go every day to your job... it becomes a habit, and all of a sudden you have to abandon it. It can be compared with cleaning your teeth. A necessary ritual. And then you lose your job... I even felt very ill, I looked awful, I had a lot of illness immediately after it happened. I am absolutely serious."

Here is an extract from another interview:

"I left my job because I wanted to have a rest. But I can't rest." (51 years old, 27 years of work as a school teacher, married)
And one more:

"My husband does not want me to work, but he knows that I will, I will convince him. I won't live without a job, I can't stay at home with the dishes." (39 years old, 21 years of work, a teacher)

Another extract from the interviews:

"I don't know any women, who find pleasure when they do not work. That could be because our everyday lives and circumstances are what they are, it is very difficult to cope with. It is not a pleasure for anyone." (49 years old, 27 years of work experience, a sewer)

Or:

"Even if I were materially very well provided for, I would like to work, because I cannot imagine any other way of life... And then, it seems to me that it is not mainly because of money, but because you feel really uncomfortable... that is dependency on the income of a husband is not a very pleasant thing." (37 years old, 16 years of work as a cook)

Another line of argument:

"I am a communicative person and I want to get out sometimes, to be out of the house. I would like to express myself... Because it is a pity to give up on yourself." (36 years old, industrial designer, married, two children)

One more line of argument:

"For me the wish for self-fulfilment in a paid job is strongly connected with independence... from the husband. I would like to prove to him that I can live on my own. Deep in my heart I am oppressed by the fact that, at this moment, I am totally dependent on another person. Whether it is a husband or someone else, it does not matter. For self-respect - perhaps that is too strong - for self-confidence - I need to have a paid job, because I am not a housewife by nature, domestic work irritates me." (39 years old, 15 years of work experience, a tourist guide)

The main reason for such attitudes to unemployment and housewifery seem to be gender stereotypes and the image of work held by women who have had longer work experience under socialism. I will briefly reconstruct these stereotypes below.

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The socialist gender socialization of a working mother

For a woman under Soviet socialism, the appropriate gender role was to have a paid job (to work) and to run a household.

It is important to realize that the image of work under socialism had its specificities. 'To work,' had the meaning of staying in one and the same state enterprise and in the same profession during the whole of one's working life. Such a career was rewarded by state benefits.

"Our generation has been poisoned by the years of stable employment and low salary in state enterprises", observes a 39-year-old woman, (a former guide with 11 years of service). Horizontal professional mobility was very low and generally not approved of. Social protection and welfare opportunities were also provided through the enterprise, and dependent as to their range and amount upon the continuity of work experience in that same enterprise. There was the special term, with a negative connotation, 'fliers', for people who often changed jobs. Such persons were considered unprofessional, bad-tempered or just 'difficult'.

The symbol of a Soviet professional career was the so-called 'labour book', which was kept in the personnel department of the enterprise and in which all the steps in one's professional career were (and still are) noted. One manager of a personnel department described the image of an appropriate labour book as follows: "The good labour book has only one record, that is: 'Admitted to the enterprise in 19xx.'"

Very often the employee did not experience any professional growth (especially in Soviet mass professions such as engineering, medicine and teaching). Blue-collar professionals were rewarded for making a career in the enterprise: for being first admitted as an apprentice, and then for gradually advancing to the position of head of department. A bad labour book was one in which many job changes were noted.

Of course, every working person knew that the image of the labour book regulated his or her professional and career opportunities. One of the respondents observed:

"The habit of working is very important. I have worked since I was 17 years old and I could never afford to take extra unpaid vacations. I could not do it for economic reasons. And all of us were afraid that our length-of-service record would be damaged if we took extra vacations. We were kept in fear and in captivity by the trade unions as well. If you leave and interrupt your length of service - then it is over, you get only 50% of payment for a medical certificate." (50 years old, 30 years of work experience as a schoolteacher)
Women’s labour books had their specificities too. Breaks in professional careers due to maternity leave were not registered, but women usually did not advance to the upper positions in the job hierarchy. This was considered normal, because of their maternal duties and other domestic responsibilities. A woman in a high position was looked upon by the staff manager as a somewhat outstanding person. She was predictably childless and probably single.

Working mothers felt protected by the State:

“There were certain social guarantees. Having two children, I could not be discharged, the trade union would protect me. Even if the trade union is bad, I could not be dismissed. (...) I had long holidays. They were taken in summer, during the school holidays, because I gave birth to two Soviet children. I had a short working day. In all of this I was protected by the State. Now I don’t have any guarantees.” (32 years old, length of service - seven years, an engineer)

These traits of Soviet culture - the image of work and the gender socialization of a working mother - make the first taste of unemployment extremely unpleasant for the women. A unemployed Russian woman sees herself as an idle person who has been thrown out from society.

Every time a potential respondent was asked what she was doing, she answered: “I sit at home”66 and then she told a self-justifying story of dismissal and inefficient job search.

One of the unemployed respondents observed:

“In our society, the importance of a person is determined by his/her job. Tell me, what is the first question you ask an acquaintance? Almost certainly: ‘Where do you work?’ There were such situations [when I was asked, what I was doing]... and I immediately wanted to justify myself. It is not about a sense of guilt, I have a child and so forth... I did not like my own attitude myself.” (26 years old, length of service - 18 months as an engineer, married, four-year-old son)

Thus, socialist gender typing presumed that a woman should work, and that work was not for her only a means of earning money, but also a means of self-fulfilment, self-realization and self-respect, based on her psychological and economic independence, and on the social guarantees provided by work.

“Both from the material and psychological points of view, it is very bad to be supported by your husband. When a family budget is counted in kopecks, every pair of working hands is valuable. We need the second income. This situation may only be typical of our so-called socialist society, where we have this levelling [uravnilovka] of everything. A common kindergarten, a common school... We do not have divisions between men and women, as different biological subjects. We are all comrades, and that is why all of us should work. Equally.” (27 years old, former cook, married, one daughter)

For one unemployed woman, the consequences of this gender ideology in the public sphere were as follows:

“When I left work, after 20 years at one place, it was so difficult and I was ill for the first four months. It was difficult psychologically and bad for my morale, even though my husband could support the family. I was looking at the people who were rushing to their offices in the morning and thinking: ‘My goodness! How happy I was during all those 20 years! I was needed.’ Now I did not need to go anywhere and I felt like a very unhappy person. I was literally ill.” (45 years old engineer, married)

There is more:

“My salary (...) was never decisive in the family, that is my husband has always been the breadwinner. But anyway I had this feeling... that I earned money, I worked. And now I have this very unpleasant feeling that I do not work, that money does not, so to say, belong to me. It is difficult to explain... And all of a sudden I recollected some scenes from the Russian classics, when the breadwinner returned home, and his wife pulled off his jackboots... I know it is absurd. In fact, my husband never reproached me and actually told me that I could do whatever I liked, and that I did not need to work at all, he would be able to sustain the family, but anyway it was very bad for my morale.” (32 years old, length of service - eight years as an engineer)

The feeling of not being needed is very real for these unemployed women:

“Mainly I have the feeling of not being needed. The lost generation - maybe that is too strong. Maybe it is not about the whole generation, but about those who are 10-15 years short of retirement [40-47 years old]. I see the problem exactly in this way... bright young girls are possibly ready for this kind of life, but I was educated differently. I cannot adapt. I feel in some sense like a damaged person.” (47 years old, length of service - 23 years as an engineer)

The longer the working experience of the woman and the higher her education, the more she is oriented towards active job search. At the same time, job-oriented women emphasized that their attitude towards work was exceptional. They believed that other women would prefer to be housewives. However, a simple calculation shows that Soviet power created at least three generations of ‘exceptions’ from the norm perceived of as ‘natural’. I
am convinced that women's mass experience of work in the socialist economy has had a crucial impact on the gender culture of Russian society.

The image of housework

One additional feature of Soviet gender culture can be reconstructed from the narrations of unemployed women. This is the devaluation of housework in Russian public opinion.¹

Ungratifying domestic work has low prestige. A working woman often says: "I didn't do anything today, just housework". As one of our respondents put it:

"The humiliating position of being economically dependent on the husband in the family is aggravating and this is enhanced by the absence of a culture of unemployed women in our country in general. For example, if somewhere in the US or in Europe a woman stays at home, if she does not work, if her life turned out this way, she stays at home with the family. Her mother, father, mother-in-law and husband consider this normal. This is how it should be. And everything is fine. She is in place. In this country, everybody also thinks that everything is OK. However, they will never forget to remind you who is being supported by whom. The most usual case is that a woman staying at home is thought of as being made happy by the husband, whom she is said to have benefitted from. And why? Firstly, because if you stay at home, it is implied that you are doing nothing, and that you have as much money as you want. Why? Because you were found in the dust, washed and warmed, put here, furnished with books, and yet you are raising your voice against something! In fact, you should sit quietly, wash the feet of your benefactor, and drink of that water, be happy and enjoy yourself!" (30 years old, length of service three years, diploma in computer programming)

Discourse analysis confirms that the image of work under socialism both for men and for women has been strongly associated with a paid public job. Women themselves do not consider work at home to be valuable.

Cultural stereotypes such as the devaluation of housework, the Soviet image of work, the socialization of women as working mothers - seem to predetermine psychological stress for unemployed women with longer working experience. These women resist housewifery as a career and actively look for a new job.

Becoming a housewife without (or with little) work experience

In this part of the chapter, I will turn to the problems of becoming a housewife that younger women belonging to the group of the new rich face. These women are not active in job search and their joining the labour market at this point seems very unlikely. I will try to avoid any ideological bias in the discussion of their problems, and concentrate on the formation of gender stereotypes concerning deliberate housewifery and the problems implied in this process.

Below is a typical scenario, reconstructed from the narrative interviews, of a young woman on her way to housewifery.

How they became housewives

The new housewives in our study are urban women, born in St. Petersburg. Their gender socialization can still be described as a Soviet one. This means, among other things, that their mothers and grandmothers worked all their lives, were economically independent and at the same time responsible for the household and childcare. The model of 'double shift for women' (Hochschild, 1989) was not only propagated in the mass media, but also understood by the majority of women, and at the same time considered an almost unbearable burden. This image of the mother and the grandmother engaged in public work and at the same time both instrumental and emotional leaders of the family, has not vanished. According to the study of Baraulina and Khanzhin in this book, such a view of women's roles is still very attractive to young women, even in the case where their life turns out to be that of a rich housewife.

Here is a typical scenario of a young housewife in today's Russia:

In 1993, Tanya was a 30-year-old housewife. Her husband was engaged in photography. The couple had a five-year-old son. In her final year at the biological department of the university, Tanya had married Sasha, who was a graduate student from the shipbuilding university. After graduating, she started to work as a programmer in a research institute. Soon afterwards, at the age of 25, she gave birth to her child. When her maternity leave was over, the socio-economic situation in the country and inside the family was rapidly changing. The reform policy of the Gaidar government had started. For many young mothers like Tanya, it meant that, after returning to her job, she would face either dismissal or hidden unemployment. Her qualifications were low and her type of profession was mostly not needed any more. To get back onto the labour market, she would badly need retraining. Tanya did not have financial reasons actively to search for a job, because the economic status of the family had changed. Neither were there any strong moral incentives for active job search, because of her little work experience and large amount of domestic duties. Her son was growing older and needed more attention. The child was often ill and could not then attend the daycare centre. Later, when his health improved, the parents wanted their son to go to an elitist kindergarten, which was
extremely expensive in comparison with the former standards of state pre-school institutions.

At the same time Sasha, the father of the family who had an engineer's education, started a photographic business with some of his friends from the university. The young housewife quickly adapted to her new situation, including taking educational courses at a new private university, going to the sauna and fitness centres, and taking holidays in Thailand or in the Caribbean with other housewives. The costs and benefits of housewifery justified her choice to stay at home.

This family entered the social group of new Russians. This is a strata, the ethos of which is being formed right now. We are witnessing the formation of an internal gender ethos that will regulate gender relations in the families of the new rich. The emergent patterns in the life style of the new Russians are justified by patriarchal gender ideology.

Gender roles and their justification in the families of the new rich

Let us reconstruct from the narrative interviews the family context inside which the gender culture of the new rich is forming.

As is typical of a patriarchal family model, the families are supported by the husbands. The husband decides about the family budget. The wife considers this normal and fair, because "he is the one who earns the money". In this case, the wives lack economic independence - the basis for self-confidence and high self-esteem.

The husband does not want his wife to work. According to one woman, her husband says that "a wife should be at home with the children". The wife agrees with his interpretation of her role:

"I agree with him. In some sense he considers me as a member of his staff, but this is natural for me. (...) He earns money, and I serve him - it is natural - we serve each other... He does not want me to work, because of prestige considerations. His logic is as follows: I have a lot of money, I earn so much, that my wife can afford not to work. Then he gets psychological comfort: 'I am the only provider, here am I, coming in and putting my feet on the table because I am supporting all of you...' This may not be said openly, but it is implied. 'All this money belongs to me', it is much more comfortable for him." (25 years old, one child, programming diploma)

Essentialist or even biological arguments are often brought forward to justify the emergent gender ideology of the new Russians: "If a man has this thing [penis], and a woman does not, it should have some influence..." (ibid.)

My research showed that both spouses share a traditional understanding of gender roles. They want to build their family on the principle of 'two people - one career'. The following quote is a good illustration of this attitude:

"If a husband is working himself crazy all week long, no one except me can provide him with the necessary conditions, and he asks me to stay at home for his sake, so it can be justified." (ibid.)

The spouses are in fact starting some kind of family business, which could imply that domestic duties and responsibilities (housework) have no less value than the paid job of the husband. However, there are many obstacles on the way to such a division of gender roles in the family. One is the underestimation of housework, described in the previous part of the article. The low status of domestic duties and the fact that housework is not considered work in an industrial society, bring about many conflicts in families.

Family conflicts

Economic relations have become a persistent source of conflict in the families of the new rich. "I consider my husband's money my own money", says a respondent (30 years old, two children, diploma in chemistry). The language of this phrase reveals an attitude quite different from the norm. A woman who starts a phrase with the words: 'my husband's money' does not give the impression that she is convinced that the money belongs to her. She does not even mention the 'we image' of her family, the family as a unit to which this money should belong. It is only at first glance that economic relations can seem balanced in these families.

The juridical uncertainty surrounding economic relations in families with only one breadwinner aggravates the situation. Legally, a divorced housewife should be provided for by her former husband only in special cases, if she is disabled or retired (see footnote 3). The Marriage Code was adopted when mass unemployment among women did not exist in Russia. It does not stipulate anything like a marriage contract. This means that it is mainly moral norms that regulate family economics.

This lack of legal regulation encourages a husband to think that the money he earns does not belong equally to his wife. The usual model is that he regularly gives his wife a certain amount of money. I will give some illustrations of this:

Once I was interviewing a familiar businessman that I was going to interview his wife, as a woman belonging to the new rich. His answer was indicative: "My wife has nothing to do with being rich. It is I, who am rich".
Many of my respondents told me that most conflicts in the families of the new rich are caused by material issues:

"It is because I ask for a share of his salary, to use the way I would like to, but he thinks I should earn it. He wants to control my expenditure. We fight all the time over control of my expenditure." (30 years old, one child, biologist)

"I ask for money, and I usually receive the sum I ask for, but it is often accompanied by endless speeches. He often wants to know why I need this much, and on what I spent the previous sum, and though I do not spend much, I nevertheless have to ask him how I should use the money... By the way, he does not turn down my requests, but there are so many lectures about it, that sometimes you think several times before you ask." (35 years old, 11-year-old child, diploma in engineering)

These quotes say something about the emergence of a new bourgeois ideal of marriage. This is a typical observation of a young housewife:

"I married for love, but now my husband is both the father of my children and the person who supports me. If I cease to love him, the other bonds will still exist... that is why, if I wanted to divorce, I would have to take into account all these circumstances, including the issue of money." (28 years old, two children, diploma in engineering)

It is not only finances that have become a source of deep family conflict. The whole perception of family roles is in crisis. As Tanya told me:

"He is starting to treat me like a member of staff... This is typical of men in general, and it is typical of his family in particular, but I absolutely disapprove of this attitude. I cannot allow it. And it is of extreme importance for me." (26 years old, one child, diploma in programming)

Earlier, the underestimation of the housewife's role in Russian society was mentioned. The understanding of men's roles in the family was no less penetrated by sexism than is the new ideology concerning female roles.

The interviewed housewives stated that:

"Entrepreneurship is dirty work, it is devastating. Earning money is a boring thing to do, and it is not for women." (25 years old, one child, diploma in engineering)

"A woman may stay at home if she likes. It is a different story if, as often happens, she does not want to stay at home or cannot afford to. I think that a woman should be able to decide this for herself." (28 years old, one child, diploma in engineering)

All our women respondents agreed that, as one of them put it,

"A woman should work only if she wants to, if work is her whim. She should have the opportunity to choose: if she would like to have paid work, she should work, if not - she should not. No one should be able to force her."

The general assumption is that 'paid work is a private matter for a woman'. This attitude seems to be one of the consequences of how the role of motherhood, considered essential for Russian women, has developed.

"My only unquestionable duty and responsibility in the household is to my child. Everything else is a matter of negotiation." (A young housewife)

At the same time, the attribute of a man is that of the family's breadwinner. His essential duty is to provide for his wife and children. Only in one of the interviews did the woman realize that her attitude was discriminatory against her husband, and against men in general. Describing her reaction when her husband did not bring enough money, she said:

"I became irritated. If he presumed that I should not work, then he should work like crazy from morn 'til night. But later I realised that he was my type of person. In other words, he either wanted a job that would satisfy him totally from beginning to end, or no job at all. He won't unload waggons for the sake of money... So I was getting more and more irritated. But the truth is that I did not have any moral right to feel like that. If I stay at home doing nothing [sic! - E.Z.], why should I demand anything different from him?" (39 years old, former guide, one daughter)

Such a view of appropriate gender roles may be regarded as sexism, as a discriminative attitude against both men and women.

The gender stereotypes reconstructed from these narrative interviews are also essentialist. All our respondents agreed that there were essential features (biological or 'natural') embedded in sex, which predetermine the gender roles in society, and which were violated during the socialist experiment. These 'natural' features of women are primarily connected with their child-bearing functions and maternity. For these biological reasons, women should have certain privileges in society. One such privilege should be the 'opportunity to choose' between domestic labour (which is underestimated and not understood as labour at all, as we see from our interviews) and paid work. For men this opportunity of choice
is, for biological reasons, knowingly neglected. The male image always includes
paid work. The one who does not earn money is called 'a male but not a man'
(muzhik no ne muzhina). (There is a joke on gender typing in socialism about a
child visiting the zoo with his mother. They come to the cage with an elephant in
and the child asks: "Is he a man, like our father?" and the answer is: "No, the
elephant is feeding his family, he is a man, and your father is just a male, for he
cannot provide for us.")

As illustrated above, one important feature of essentialist gender culture is the
cult of motherhood, which is deeply rooted in Russian tradition.

The motherhood cult implies that being a mother is the primary destiny of a
woman. Her biological make-up is considered to guarantee that she is an expert
in child education. Only mothers have children in Russian society. Fathers are
not taken into account by the social institutions or by people in general.
Discrimination against fathers as parents is typical.

The motherhood cult has been reinforced during the last decade. More and
more complaints about state pre-school and school education have appeared in the
mass media (Attwood, 1990). Motherhood was stressed in the propaganda after
the start of the privatization reforms. The fact that Russian mothers were working
en masse was often considered to be the reason for youth delinquency and the
growing crime rate among youngsters. 'Back to the family' became a slogan for
national-patriotic political movements during perestroika, and it was later
adopted by many politicians.

On the basis of the motherhood cult, sexist stereotypes are blossoming in
Russian gender culture. These stereotypes oppose the ideology of equal
opportunities for women in the public sphere, and for men in the private sphere.
The idea of parental duties, of a social mother, are not relevant to the attitudes of
the respondents. They have not internalized the moral of the poem by Dr Suess
about Horton the Elephant, who was a better father than the irresponsible
biological mother - bird Maisy, who had abandoned her offspring.

Conclusion

I would now like to summarize the reconstruction of gender stereotypes that was
made with the help of the interviews. Soviet gender culture is a complex mixture
of egalitarian and patriarchal traditional stereotypes. On the one hand, an
essentialist understanding of gender destiny is typical of mass consciousness. On
the other hand, underestimation of domestic work and housewifery in general is
shared by both sexes. These gender stereotypes are reinforced by the Russian
Code of Marriage and Work legislation.

Russian women who are becoming housewives in the early 1990s feel that
their gender socialization, as well as the legal norms, do not fit their new
experiences. To rationalize and overcome their frustration, they have to develop
a new gender ideology appropriate to their way of life. This can be predicted to
be an ideology that will reinforce the motherhood cult of traditional Russian
culture and re-estimate the value of housework in society.

Before the household debate was initiated in Western societies by Marxist
feminists in the 1970s, the evaluation of unpaid domestic work was pretty much
the same as in Russia today. This implies that, sooner or later, we will witness a
household debate in Russia on the justification of housewifery as a career. My
prognosis is that official gender ideology will propagate such a debate, because
it will help women to adapt to unemployment and housewifery. I also expect the
discussion on housewifery in Russia to be quite different from that of Western
feminists. The theme of the re-assessment of housework will be used in the
reinforcement of traditional gender roles. I am, however, also convinced that the
majority of Russian women will reject housewifery as their strategic choice and
will be active in job search, self-employment and job creation. Their initiative
and work orientation are features of the socialist gender culture into which they
were socialized. Signs of such initiatives can be seen today in the new women's
organizations, and in their political and business involvement.

Notes

Oakley starts with the observation that housewives are married women, and "the
allocation of the housewife role to the woman in marriage is socially structured.
Marriage is not simply a personal relationship: rather it is an institution composed of a
socially accepted union of individuals in husband and wife roles. Housewifery is an
economically dependent occupation" (Oakley 1991, p. 78).

2. In the Law on Marriage and Family of the Russian Federation (adopted in 1969 and
revised in 1989), five articles deal with the spouse's responsibilities of reciprocal
support. The obligation to support a spouse economically is limited to cases of disabled
persons, pregnant wives and spouses with children under three years old. The
obligation to provide financial support is also connected with the ability of the spouse
to do so. This means that a spouse can receive alimony while married. After divorce,
the ex-spouse preserves his or her right to economic support if she or he is a disabled
person or if she or he has become disabled within one year of the divorce. The unreasonable behaviour of the spouse, as well as a short-term marriage to a disabled person, can justify exemption from paying alimony. The case of mass unemployment is not taken into consideration in the law.

3. "The housewife's work is not regarded as work because she receives no wage or salary for it (...) the housewife as a houseworker has no rights to the financial benefits - sickness benefit, unemployed benefit (...) which accrue to other workers through state insurance systems" (Oakley 1991, p. 78). Therefore the housewife does not work.

"(...) the modern concept of work, as the expenditure of energy for financial gain, defines housework as the most inferior and marginal of all work" (ibid., p. 79).

4. The respondent is using the Russian idiom 'to put a cross on yourself'. In this phrase, domestic labour is equated to suicide!

5. People with high education were provided with jobs according to the state-regulated schemes for the distribution of work places.

6. Language usage is very indicative in this case. An unemployed woman (a housewife) is said in Russian to be 'sitting at home', which differs, of course, in connotation with the phrase 'to stay at home' or 'to work in the house'.

7. This is a self report of a 27-year-old woman who has two young children and only three years of work experience since graduating.

8. The four characteristic features of the housewife's role in modern industrialized societies are:
(1) its exclusive allocation to women,
(2) its association with economic dependence in modern marriage,
(3) its status as non-work - or its opposition to real or economically productive work,
(4) its primacy to women, that is its priority over other roles (Oakley, 1991).

What Does the (Russian) Woman Want? - Women Psychoanalysts Talk

ANNA ROTKIRCH AND ANNA TEMKINA

"After the crash of the totalitarian system a woman could discover her own autonomy, which she had never experienced before, as she was always stuck with the kids or with her work... though the important thing is what she wants herself. And now she has at least a greater chance to find out about this." (Student of psychoanalysis, 38 years)

"What does it mean to be a woman? To be feminine, of course. And it means to give what you are expected to give. In your own family, for example, to give warmth and attention and to be good." (Psychoanalyst, 31 years)

Introduction

In our research on the emergence of new spheres of professional activity in Russia, and especially on the position and representations of women within them, psychoanalysis was chosen as one particularly promising case study. This field, revived after 60 years of almost total non-existence, has several interesting aspects.

Firstly, the position of psychoanalysis in former Soviet Russia was almost opposite to that in the West. Except for a few minor and indirect influences, psychoanalytical theory and practice were virtually unknown in the Soviet Union
Women's Voices in Russia Today

Edited by
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Publication of the Research Group of Social Change and Inertia in Russia
Sponsored by the Academy of Finland and the University of Helsinki

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