

**Citation:** Solari, Cinzia. 2006. "Professionals and Saints: How Immigrant Careworkers Negotiate Gendered Identities at Work." *Gender & Society* 20:301-331.

**Note:** The final, definitive version of the article is available at <http://online.sagepub.com/>.

**Professionals and Saints:  
How Immigrant Careworkers Negotiate Gender Identities at Work\***

Cinzia Solari  
*University of California, Berkeley*

*Russian-speaking homecare workers deploy two divergent discursive practices—professionalism and sainthood—in understanding carework. These two meaning-making systems have consequences for how this work is performed and experienced by workers. Surprisingly, the division is not based on gender. Instead, immigration laws filter Jewish and Orthodox Christian immigrants from the former Soviet Union into two separate sets of resettlement institutions. The characteristics of these separate institutional settings shape the discursive tools available to these two groups leading Jewish refugees to deploy professionalism while Orthodox Christian immigrants deploy sainthood. These discursive practices impact gendered identities allowing workers in some cases to renegotiate hegemonic notions of masculinity and create new models of “feminine” caregiving.*

Keywords: gendered identities; carework; immigration; former Soviet Union; IHSS

The demand for in-home domestic and care services, especially in-home elderly care, is rapidly increasing in the world's wealthier nations. Migrants, mostly women, are leaving their homes in poorer nations and engaging in care and domestic work abroad (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Parrenas 2001). Homecare workers from the former Soviet Union (FSU) in San Francisco are part of this globalizing care industry. They assist disabled or elderly clients in their homes with domestic work such as housecleaning, cooking, and grocery shopping as well as personal care including assistance eating, dressing, bathing, and bowel care. For Russian-speaking

immigrants, most of whom have high education levels and held high-status occupations prior to migration, homecare work represents dramatic downward occupational mobility (Gold 1995).

This article examines the meanings that Russian-speaking immigrants, both women and men, assign to paid caring labor. Two discursive practices impacting work identities and the way workers performed caretaking tasks emerged from my interviews with homecare workers from the FSU. Some workers created professional relationships with those they cared for maintaining emotional distance and constructing strong identities as “workers” despite working in private homes. Others understood homecare work as Christian service rejecting an identity as “worker” in favor of a personal and familial framing of their relationship with care receivers. Why do recent immigrants from the FSU of similar age and socio-economic background engage in divergent discursive practices as “professionals” and “saints?” While I expected men to do carework as “professionals” and women to do carework as “saints,” gender did not overdetermine the discursive practices of the Russian-speaking careworkers in this study. Rather, religious settlement institutions defined the discursive landscape on which immigrant workers mobilized gendered understandings in creating identities at work. Jews deployed professionalizing discursive practices while Russian Orthodox Christians deployed discursive practices of sainthood. This challenges our understanding that women and men do carework differently due to dominant gendered understandings about caring labor.

### **THE WAYS MEN AND WOMEN CARE**

Studies that look at unpaid caring labor within families not only find that women take on disproportionate amounts of carework, but when men do perform carework they often perform different tasks than women.<sup>1</sup> For example, Horowitz (1985) found that when sons and daughters were faced with caring for their aging or ill parents, women were more likely to provide the

hands-on, daily care while men were more likely to see care as financial management and maintenance of the parents' home. Men and women also differ when it comes to performing "emotion work." Men deemphasize or are less likely than women to adequately perform emotional labor (Hochschild 1983; Miller and Kaufman 1996; Williams 1989). Similarly Jutras and Veilleux (1991, 2) found that women's greater involvement than men in caring for their elderly relatives was "consistent with [women's] tendency to develop more intense and more intimate social relationships, to be more nurturant, [and] to be more compassionate." While in western, middle-class society women are expected to be nurturing, emotionally expressive, communal, and concerned about others (Valian 1999), standards of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995) encourage men to perform caring tasks from an emotionally safe distance. Caregiving and nurturing are considered "natural" attributes in a woman but exceptional skills in a man (Miller and Kaufman 1996; Williams 1995).

When men perform caring labor, they tend to approach caretaking with a professional or managerial model (Fitting et al. 1986) or as "case managers" (Jutras and Veilleux 1991). In western society men are expected to be independent, agentic, instrumental, assertive, and task-oriented, attributes associated with the professional world (Valian 1999) and this spills over into caretaking responsibilities. Thompson (2002, 34,38) argues that this professional approach to caregiving or supervising the delivery of services to others, part of what he calls the "unique" way men care, is unfairly dismissed as "cold" and "uncaring" and can positively shelter men from undue suffering and caregiver burn-out, give men a sense of being in charge, and allow them to take rest time or ask for assistance without guilt.<sup>2</sup>

However few studies look at how men and women understand caring labor as paid employment. While Hochschild (1983) suggests that women generally do more emotion

management at work than men and are more likely to see relational skills as a resource to be deployed on the job, whether women are more nurturant, develop more intimate relations, and perform more emotional labor while men perform less hands-on care, are more emotionally detached, and approach caretaking with a professional or managerial model when providing paid care is yet to be empirically investigated.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, caring labor in the United States is increasingly outsourced to immigrants. While there are studies that look at the meanings immigrant women workers assign to paid cleaning labor (Glenn 1986; Romero 1992; Salzinger 1991), few studies look at paid caring labor (See Hondagneu Sotelo 2001 for a notable exception that looks at live-in nannies) and no studies look at both women and men performing low-wage carework.

This study of male and female careworkers from the FSU allows for an investigation of the way immigrant men and women understand paid carework of non-family members. It suggests that the way men and women negotiate gender identities with respect to carework is more complicated than previous studies suggest. While the women in this study did not engage in a renegotiation of dominant notions of femininity, a subset of these women deployed a professional framework scholars have attributed specifically to men. Also, a subset of men in this study actively renegotiated dominant notions of masculinity arguing that paid carework is a Christian calling and like male religious leaders such as priests and monks who minister to the sick and needy, emotion work, hands-on care, and personal connections based on warmth and love are compatible with dominant notions of masculinity. Discursive practices are not determined solely by dominant notions of gender as current feminist thought suggests, rather concrete, local institutions support discursive practices that allow or prevent gendered renegotiations at work affecting both work behaviors and the experience of providing care. In the

following pages I will specify the data sources for this study, provide a contextual background for Russian-speaking immigrants in the United States, and describe the discursive practices — professionalism and sainthood—that emerged from the interviews and participant observations. Here I will argue that religious settlement institutions set the conditions for the particular way gender and work identities are woven together in the work lives of Russian-speaking homecare workers.

### **STUDYING IMMIGRANT HOMECARE WORKERS**

The data for this study were gathered in 2001-2003 in San Francisco. The data collection included two components: interviews with workers and extensive participant observation as well as interviews within religious settlement and related organizations. First I conducted fifteen in-depth interviews lasting two to four hours with five men and ten women working as homecare workers from the FSU. The interviews took place at a location of the respondents choosing often a park, café, or their homes. With the exception of one younger worker, worker's ages ranged from mid 40s to early 60s. Interviewees were from Russia and Ukraine with two respondents coming from other post-Soviet republics. At the time of the interviews respondents had been in the United States between two and eight years with all but four living in the United States for five or less years. Respondents spoke little or no English so interviews were conducted in Russian and my own ease with the language increased throughout the project. Interviews often began by me answering questions rather than asking them. When they learned that I am the daughter of Italian immigrants and that most women in my family are elder care providers, they visibly relaxed and many said they now understood why I wanted to speak with them despite not having family roots in the post-Soviet world. I believe that sharing my family's immigration story and some of my parents' experiences as low-wage workers made respondents feel more at

ease with telling a story of downward mobility that was at times painful and embarrassing to recount.

Respondents worked as homecare workers through In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Public Authority. Created in 1973, IHSS is a division of the California Department of Social Services that administers public financing to the elderly and disabled who meet low-income and disability criteria. This office matches homecare workers with eligible clients, processes the workers' paychecks, and negotiates with the homecare workers' union. IHSS pays workers from government funds. Social workers from the Department of Human Services determine the number of work hours per month each client will receive and the tasks the homecare worker will provide. While individual clients do not pay the workers, they are the "actual" employers with the power to hire and to fire the homecare worker and most negotiations around tasks to be completed and how the work hours will be distributed throughout the month are ultimately conducted with the client rather than the absent social worker. While some respondents cared for native-born clients, most of them cared for elderly Jewish immigrants from the FSU who came to the United States in the predominantly Jewish migration waves that began in the early 1970s. Often workers had multiple clients in order to piece together full time work.

According to the 2000 census, immigrants from the FSU are only 3.4 percent of San Francisco County's population yet they make up 25 percent of the county's 8,000 IHSS homecare workers (Delp and Quan 2002). This study is based on a non-random sample selected from an IHSS data base containing a fluctuating 300 active files of Russian-speaking homecare workers caring specifically for non-family members. I gained access through Milena, herself a refugee from the FSU, who worked as a placement counselor at a San Francisco IHSS office.<sup>4</sup> Of the total population of roughly 2,000 Russian-speaking homecare workers in San Francisco

County, the respondents in this study were typical of the larger pool of Russian-speaking homecare workers in age and pre-migration socio-economic standing. However, the majority of homecare workers on the IHSS payroll are caring for a family member, often part-time, rather than providing care services as full-time employment to non-family members. Men were also over represented among my respondents. They made up about three percent of the data base but one-third of my sample. Below the respondents are grouped by discursive practice, sex, and religious affiliation:

	<b>Professionals (Jewish Refugees)</b>	<b>Saints (Orthodox Christian Immigrants)</b>
<b>women</b>	<p>6</p> <p>Elena (accountant)* Galina (secretary) Nadya (materials engineer) Larissa (university instructor) Ana (medical doctor) Valentina (economist)</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Olga (doctoral student) Valya (economist) Tanya (economist)</p>
<b>men</b>	<p>1</p> <p>Ivan (electrical engineer)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Dmitri (mechanical engineer) Ata (science teacher) Alexander (industrial engineer) Sergei (physicist)</p>

\*Occupation pre-migration in parentheses.

The interviews were taped and transcribed. I followed a grounded theory approach to data analysis, coding my interviews inductively by theme (Strauss and Corbin 1990).

As the discursive practices of professionalism and sainthood emerged and it became clear that gender, while important, was not the organizing principle I had anticipated, I realized I needed to supplement the interviews with workers with a broader understanding of how immigrants from the FSU came to seek homecare jobs and the various organizations that influenced this work. This led me to conduct participant observation and formal and informal interviews with key persons in both Jewish Resettlement Services (JRS) and community

organizations affiliated with the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). At IHSS I interviewed placement counselors and observed orientation sessions conducted in Russian where I was able to speak informally with new workers and experienced workers. Finally, I participated in Russian-language meetings of the homecare workers' union, SEIU Local 250.

### **SETTLING IN SAN FRANCISCO**

Jews from the FSU began entering the United States in the 1970s and since the 1980s have been the largest refugee group to enter the United States averaging 30,000 annually (Gold 1995). However San Francisco has also received large numbers of Russian Orthodox immigrants who formed communities made up mostly of uneducated peasants in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York prior to World War I, with more affluent immigrants arriving after the 1917 Revolution (Raymond and Jones 2000). Recent immigrants, including Jewish refugees, migrated to the United States for economic reasons in the hopes of giving their children and grandchildren greater opportunities (Gold 1995). Jewish and Christian Orthodox immigrants from the FSU are channeled through two different sets of resettlement institutions upon entering the United States. Thus, while workers performed similar tasks for the same public office, they found homecare work through two different institutional avenues and, as a result, came to understand homecare work in different discursive and practical ways.

JRS are a legacy of the Cold War, during which the United States granted refugee status to all Soviet citizens who wished to emigrate. Yet, few managed to obtain exit visas from Soviet authorities. As reports of persecution against Soviet Jews increased, the organized American Jewish community came together in 1973 to found the National Conference of Soviet Jewry (NCSJ). This coalition represented nearly all affiliated Jews and its goal was to pressure the Soviet government to give Jews the freedom to exit the Soviet Union. After a heated political

battle, the NCSJ won the Jackson-Vanik amendment in January 1975, which imposed economic penalties on countries that denied its citizens the right to emigrate. This amendment and the later collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, facilitated the exodus of Soviet Jews first to Israel and then to the United States. Soviet Jews continue to benefit from U.S. legislation that makes it easier for them to qualify for refugee status compared to other groups.

Since Jews from the FSU receive refugee status from the U.S. government, they have access to a variety of resettlement services from the state including cash assistance and welfare benefits. But, before refugees can receive state assistance, they are required to interact with Jewish resettlement institutions that provide financial support and other services for the refugees during their first four months in the United States (Wertheimer 1995). Jewish refugees from the FSU first meet with Jewish Family and Children's Services (JFCS) to set up social security numbers, housing, and school placement for children. Next, working-age refugees are scheduled for a meeting with a job placement counselor at Jewish Vocational Services (JVS). Most refugees eventually find a job through JVS, although rarely in the first four months, and stay connected to JVS over the course of many years.

Russian Orthodox immigrants enter a very different institutional context from Soviet Jews upon arriving to San Francisco. They acquire legal status in haphazard ways such as winning the green card lottery or as part of family reunification programs. They do not come to IHSS through formal job placement programs like the Jewish refugees, but through community-based organizations and networks mediated by the ROC. San Francisco was recognized as an important Russian Orthodox community when the ROC in America moved its headquarters to San Francisco in 1870 and built the Holy Trinity Cathedral. This cathedral became the center of

support for the new influx of émigrés during the 1920s and today the ROC continues to play an important role in resettling non-Jewish immigrants from the FSU.

## FINDINGS

From the interview data I found homecare workers from FSU deployed two discursive framings—professionalism and sainthood—to interpret their work. These discursive practices in turn affected the way workers performed job tasks and interacted with clients producing “professionals” and “saints.” Professionals and saints diverged along four axes of carework: orientation to clients, work identity, money, and “dirty work.”

First, professionals described their relationships with clients as contract-based and part of the “public sphere” challenging mainstream perceptions that homecare work is not “real work” because it takes place in private homes. In contrast, saints constructed highly personal and familial relationships with their clients referring to their clients by familial titles such as “grandmother,” “father,” or “brother.” For saints, the relationship with their “fictive kin” was governed by “private sphere” expectations of duty, love, and obligation. Second professionals and saints had different identities as “workers” and assigned different meanings to their wages. Professionals had a strong sense of themselves as workers. Not only did they reinforce this through business-like relations with clients, but they also highlighted union membership as proof that they are workers. Professionals underscored their skills, proudly displaying certificates acquired through union and other training courses. In fact, because workers’ pay came from the state and not individual clients, professionals called themselves “government workers,” a respectable title in the Soviet context. In contrast, saints only weakly identified as “workers.” They spoke of their work as “God’s work” and as a calling to Christian service and were embarrassed to admit that they received pay in exchange for their services. For saints, the fact

that their pay comes from the state and not the low-income elderly or disabled person they care for, underlines the moral goodness of the care they provide.

Finally, “dirty work” such as bathing, dressing, and bowel care was more difficult for professionals. They struggled to explain “dirty work” within the framework of professionalism and often expressed disgust and shame at this aspect of their job. For saints, notions of Christian service provided these workers with tools to understand “dirty work” as fulfilling and another way of serving God.

Before explaining why professionals and saints emerged, the narratives that follow illustrate typical framings and work behaviors for male and female professionals and saints in this study.

### **Dissonant Masculinities: Male Professionals**

Ivan, an electrical engineer, and his family came to the United States as Jewish refugees in 1997. He worked briefly for an electrical company but found he was “confused all the time” at work because his knowledge did not transfer across continents. He began caring for an elderly Russian woman in her home, including taking her to doctor appointments, doing her grocery shopping, and cooking her meals. Ivan sheepishly explained that this was “women’s work,” but he was really “a professional” and was quick to point out that he had quit after one year and was no longer a homecare worker. The tasks of homecare work are not part of the gendered expectations for men in the FSU and Ivan understood that, in the United States, domestic labor is considered female immigrant “dirty work.” Low-status when performed by women, Ivan felt this work was even more degrading when performed by men.

Since his year in homecare work, Ivan has had a series of temporary jobs including working in a repair shop and driving a delivery truck. None of these temporary jobs paid as well as homecare work or provided him with health and dental insurance, which he received as a homecare worker. Nor did Ivan find any of these new jobs satisfying. Why would Ivan make what appears to be an economically irrational decision to leave homecare work for jobs that pay less and do not provide benefits but are sex-typed “male?” Some scholars argue it is more important for men to interpret their work as “manly” than it is for women to interpret their work as “feminine” (Leidner 1993; Williams 1989). Work is not proof of female identity because, unlike masculinity, femininity has not been traditionally achieved by paid work (Leidner 1993). Valian (1999, 44) writes “the cultural definition of a man . . . is less flexible than that of a woman; a man finds it particularly difficult to retain his identity as a man if he performs feminine jobs.”

Domestic work is particularly incongruent with hegemonic masculinity. Ray (200, 707), in her study of domestic workers in Calcutta found that “the men engaged in this work are often bitter and frustrated with themselves” because “the essence of domestic service is subservience,” which “runs counter to hegemonic ideas of masculinity.” Adding the personal, bodily care required by elderly clients to the domestic work homecare workers perform only heightens this dissonance between hegemonic notions of masculinity and paid carework. Yet gender dissonance does not mean that there is no room for variation in gendered interpretations of feminized work. Leidner (1993) maintains that workers retain the flexibility to reinterpret work activities in ways that support their gender identities.

However, such a reinterpretation is not always possible, as the case of Ivan suggests. Institutional contexts must support the reinterpretation if it is to have meaning for the worker and

be recognized as valid by others. As I will show, the interplay of discursive practices and institutions structures the field of work-gender possibilities. Professionalism did not provide Ivan with a satisfying way of imagining homecare work as expressing his masculinity and preferred lower wages without benefits in work sex-typed male.

### **Renegotiating Masculinities: Male Saints**

Ivan's decision to leave homecare work is congruent with what scholars have to say about masculinities and work. Especially anomalous then are the men in this sample who continued doing homecare work and even found it satisfying. Alexander, with degrees in both industrial engineering and industrial law, was the director of a factory in Russia, a high-status and well-paid position. When I met Alexander, he was caring for two elderly Russian-speaking clients as a homecare worker. Alexander quickly adapted to his new job and explained that to provide good care, homecare workers and their clients must become family. He reasoned that if you just walk in and perform the assigned tasks, "your client's health will not improve. He will even get worse!" Alexander said of an elderly Jewish client he called "father":

But when we are friends, I arrive, I tell him jokes and we laugh together. I support him. And then when I leave, we have been well together, happy together, and he misses me when I go. Sometimes I come on the weekends and say, "Dasha,<sup>5</sup> I've missed you." And he says, "Where is my Sasha." And I say, "Where is my Dasha." What I mean is that you have to be friends. This relationship is better. You have to be friends, not just client and server. You have to be family. They already consider me a member of the family.... I consider him, I even tell him, "You are like my father," and he tells me I am like his son.

Alexander's understanding of his work is not a professional one based on a strong identity as "worker." For Alexander, family member is higher status than "server." As a result, he blurred the boundaries between work and personal hours visiting his "father" even on his weekends off. Creating intimate relationships with his clients was part of a religious calling. Alexander said,

“You know, you have to do this work with your soul and understand it is a vocation, a calling to help people.” Alexander believed that part of this “vocation” was prolonging his “father’s” life.

He said:

I need to make him happy so that he knows that life is beautiful and he has to live – it is not time for him to die. Together with him I have to prolong his life. I have to make sure that he is happy, that everything is OK, that he has light in his soul. This is what I understand my work to be. When I arrive he should know that with my arrival he will come back to life.

Alexander’s eyes sparkled with pride as he exclaimed, “They told me that he would only live two or three months. Thank God we have already been together ten months!” According to Alexander, not only is his “father” living longer than expected, but after being wheelchair-bound, he is now miraculously able to stand and walk short distances. Alexander seemed to describe himself not only as a saint, but as a Christ figure with the ability to heal, make the crippled walk, and bring people back from near death. Christian discursive practices allowed Alexander to shift the basis on which the prestige of his work was to be judged from a scale of income and occupational hierarchy to a morality scale established by Orthodox Christianity. Alexander and the other saints placed themselves at the top of this morality scale. Within the framework of Orthodox Christianity, homecare work was transformed from “dirty work” to important Christian service work and the worker him or herself was also transformed from a low-wage worker to a “saint.”

When I asked Alexander if he identified with a particular religion, he answered, “Yes, I’m Russian.” In response to my confusion he added, “That means I am Orthodox Christian.”<sup>6</sup> Although he is a “believer” and participates in Christian Orthodox community activities such as game nights and even trips to Las Vegas, Alexander does not attend religious services. He explained that at sixty, having lived his entire life under Soviet rule where religion was

forbidden, it was too late for him to start something new. Nevertheless, discourses of Orthodox Christian morality, which had little or no power to affect the meanings he attached to pre-migration work practices, are now powerful devices for assigning meaning to his new vocation in San Francisco. Alexander believed that he was “living closer to God” since migrating because of the caring labor he performs. Orthodox Christian discourse helps Alexander deal with the problem of work in a context where the ROC is the institutional glue holding this immigrant community together. If Alexander had found work in his field of engineering, he most likely would not have mobilized Orthodox Christian discourse as a resource for giving meaning to his engineering job. A complex interplay between the structural reality of the labor opportunities for immigrants, gender, and the salience of the ROC has made Orthodox Christian discourse both attractive and deployable for addressing this aspect of his new life in San Francisco.

Ata, a former science teacher from Azerbaijan, took a similar approach to his work and clients. Like Alexander, he minimized the fact that he was a worker with a contract and highlighted the familial relationships he had with his clients governed by love, duty, obligation, and God. In speaking about a client he called “brother,” Ata stated that his entire family was involved in his relationship with this client. They often got together for walks, dinners, and holidays. This type of close personal relationship that Ata cultivated with his “fictive kin” clients made it impossible for him to imagine himself in a cash nexus with them. For Ata, the fact that he was paid by the state and not his low-income, elderly clients reinforced the saintliness of his work. He saw these “free hours” as a “blessing, whether you are a believer or a non-believer.” Not only does the depersonalization of the monetary exchange spare the client a financial burden, but the worker is spared the awkward situation of negotiating salary for intimate, bodily care. It reinforced Ata’s religious understanding of homecare work and supported the

construction of himself as a Christian person who will be repaid by God, not his client, for his kindness.

The mere suggestion that Ata may be connected to his clients by money exchanges was offensive to him. During the course of our interview, Ata explained that he often takes care of the son of a client who he referred to as his “grandmother.” The son was forty years-old and disabled but not eligible for government subsidized homecare services. When Ata’s “grandmother” was in the hospital, Ata visited her disabled son every day, cooked his meals, did his shopping, and took him for walks in the park. When I asked if he was paid for this work, Ata glared at me and answered emphatically:

There is no need! I do not need money for this! I’m not that kind of person! I can’t take anything from him! When people understand kindness, they answer with kindness. This is very good. This is more valuable than money, more valuable than gold! Money – it’s here today and gone tomorrow! But human relations, this is an eternal thing!

Ata did of course have monetary concerns. He lived in a three-bedroom apartment with his wife and five of his six children. Ata worked more than fifty hours a week and still spent extra, unpaid hours with his clients and even his client’s family members. When worker-client relationships become familial, personal obligations replace contractual obligations in defining the expectations of that relationship. Interpreting his work through the discourse of Orthodox Christian morality created the situation in which to be a saint, he had to work more than his billable hours.

This same Orthodox Christian framing that led Ata to work extra, unpaid hours also provided him with a powerful meaning-making system that gave his work dignity. I asked Ata if he was closer to some clients than others. He answered:

I cannot be dual-natured – with you behave one way and with another, another way. I cannot be like that. I cannot be servile. If you relate to a person with kindness, he will also relate to you with kindness.

For Ata, taking care of someone whom he does not love, who is not a family member, would make him “servile” or, to use Alexander’s word, a “server.” It would challenge his sense of masculinity and his dignity, making him a servant instead of a saint. This religious framework allowed Ata to perform some of the more distasteful tasks of carework related to bodily care. Ata recounted:

Sometimes he wets himself and doesn’t make it to the toilet. But he is a sick man and I do not hold him in contempt. I take this as my duty. I wash him under the shower and dress him in clean clothes. I do not feel disgust towards him because I relate to him with caring. If I had to do this with someone else or between us there wasn’t the same relationship, I couldn’t do this and a number of other things for that person because, of course, it is unpleasant.

Maintaining a personal, familial relationship with his clients, enabled Ata to manage his feelings of disgust. As a saint, Ata imposed on himself the appropriate emotional responses to these “dirty” tasks of carework. He transformed the work itself from “dirty work” to a personal and moral set of obligations to his “brother.”

These Orthodox Christian men challenge the way scholars have come to assume men provide care. They consciously performed emotional labor. Alexander pointed out that without this component, his clients’ health would not improve. While men have been found to provide care for family members within a professional or managerial model, male saints created intimate and personal relationships with clients performing hands-on care such as bathing, feeding, and dressing clients.

### **Naturalized Feminities: Female Professionals and Saints**

While the care literature shows that women emphasize emotional labor and personal relationships of obligation rather than professionalism when performing unpaid care, some women in this study were saints and others professionals. Respondents were mothers and most

were grandmothers who were close to finishing or had finished their careers in their home country as accountants, engineers, and economists and discovered that they were channeled into homecare work by their settlement institutions.

Unlike the men, the women in this study did not feel that they had to justify why they were doing homecare work. Women experienced this work as continuous with the dominant sexual division of labor. One woman stated, “I raised two kids, have a husband, and nursed my mother until her death. I’ve been a homecare worker all my life!” The fact that homecare workers are predominantly female reinforced the assumption that women are better suited to perform carework. During the interviews, many women explained their presence in homecare work as “natural.” This does not mean that these women did not realize that they had experienced downward occupational mobility. Discursive practices of both professionalism and sainthood allowed respondents to increase the status they could claim for performing paid caring labor, but they did not engage in discursive practices that involved renegotiating their femininity.

Like the male saints, duty, obligation, and God governed Valya’s interactions with her client from the FSU whom she called “grandmother.” Valya, formerly an economist at a high-powered finance firm, explained that she never pays any mind to the hours that the social worker sets. She said she stays as long as it takes to do everything her “grandmother” needs. Valya explained that her “grandmother” likes it when she sits and chats with her, but this is not on the list of tasks the social worker had written up. So, Valya performed some of her work tasks off hours such as cook for her “grandmother” when she did the cooking for her own household. This way she warmed up food when she was with her “grandmother” leaving them more time to go for walks and to talk. When I asked Valya if she drew any boundaries around what were and were not part of her work responsibilities, she answered:

Let's assume she asked me to do something, but I didn't do it. This would weigh on my soul for a long time and this isn't good... [H]ow can you behave that way? That isn't Christian! It is forbidden to behave that way! It is a sin! You have decided to work with people; you *have* to love them; you *have* to take care of them. If you do not like them, you do not like this work, so get out!

Understanding homecare work through the prism of Russian Orthodoxy, Valya was unable to set boundaries between work responsibilities and personal obligations. Saints, whether male or female, had a similar orientation to the tasks of homecare work.

In contrast, professionals mobilized a different set of discursive resources creating different experiences of these same job tasks. Before emigrating at the age of fifty-three, Elena was an accountant at a public firm. After her office closed, Elena and her family came to San Francisco as Jewish refugees. I asked her why she decided to do homecare work, and she replied:

Homecare work is good work because we practically work for the government. It is honest work. Maybe I could find a job in a Russian-run shop but, see, in the Soviet Union, honest people do not work in stores... Even here the Russian storeowners practice "dishonest business." They do everything by *blat*<sup>7</sup> and you get paid in cash. It isn't for me. Of course the bad part about homecare work is that you have to work with difficult people.

Elena did not define homecare work as "good" because it was God's work, but because they "practically worked for the government." Since most workers in the FSU were government employees, Elena used this phrase as a cultural cue to communicate that she is an honest and respectable worker. While homecare work was an unexpected occupation for Elena given her education and past positions, identifying herself as a government worker emphasized the one, if tenuous, thread of continuity between her work experience before and after migration.

For Elena, the social workers who evaluated the progress of her patients caused her "status pain" (Huges 1971). She asserted that the social workers did not assign enough work hours to sick clients placing her in the difficult situation of deciding how to address clients' needs in too few hours. Elena said that she tried to stay within the hours allotted exclaiming, "It

hurts to stop working when you know the hours are not enough to help the person, but it hurts even more to work for free. How can you be a professional in these circumstances?" She continued:

The social worker comes to make sure you are doing your job....They ask my client about her health, but they never ask me anything. Who knows more about her health than me? I take care of her every day!

By ignoring Elena as a resource when deciding how to administer her client's care, the social worker showed a lack of respect for Elena's knowledge and skill, challenging her claim to professionalism.

Unlike the saints, Elena did not think of her clients as family members stating that one must "maintain a worker-client relationship" because it is more "professional" and less "confusing." This approach helped Elena protect herself from exploitation such as working without pay. Similarly, Nadya, a materials engineer from the Ukraine in her early fifties, also argued that good care could only be provided within professional relationships. Nadya recognized that her work responsibilities were limited by the fact that she was not a family member:

One of my clients had diabetes and they gave her insulin shots. The nurse said to me, "I would like you to do that yourself." And I said, no, it wasn't my job. I am not trained as a nurse. I was an engineer! Plus, they are required to pay me more if I am to do that work They said you *must* do this. I said, no. I have an agreement. I check her blood pressure; I give her the sugar test and prick her finger. But, I said, the other stuff is not my responsibility. And they said, "Oh, we will teach you." And I said, no. She said, "Even the daughter-in-law does it." I said, the daughter-in-law is a relative, and relatives can do whatever they want. But this is my job. I mean, I could be sued!

Nadya understands on a practical level that she is not, in fact, her client's family, and this affects what tasks she believed she was able to perform. She used her contract agreement to help her negotiate the boundaries of her job responsibilities. This does not mean that professionals never

performed tasks outside their contract. Elena who tried to stay within her billable hours did not always succeed in doing so and professionals as well as saints had stories of organizing a birthday party or otherwise performing small, “extra” tasks that they knew would please their client. Nevertheless, professionals did not regularly work extra hours or days off the way saints did and they noted that these tasks were “extra.”

Galina similarly maintained that she was a skilled professional. A secretary before immigrating to San Francisco with her family in 1996, Galina explained:

I chose to do this work because you don't need to speak English. Through the Jewish community center, I already have my certificate. I studied at college. The certificate is in Health Care.... The certificate I got from college includes studying diet and how to feed them [elderly clients] properly, how to watch over them. Each of these topics has its own certificate.

Galina is proud of the certificates she has earned, and she displayed them to me as proof of her skill and professional status.

Galina expressed frustration at having to frequently remind clients that she was not required to fulfill all of their requests. She understood her job as a bounded set of contractual responsibilities and not a set of nebulous personal obligations:

This is my job and they need to understand that! They think that *they* pay me money and not that the *government* pays me my money! I work for the government of the United States, and *they* do not give me anything.... They think they have the power! My husband says, I help them go pee pee and they think *they* have the power!

This strong assertion that homecare work is a job with a finite set of tasks differs from the way saints defined their familial relations with clients. Yet, similar to the saints, Galina emphasized that the actual source of her pay was not the individual client but the state, and therefore her employer was the U.S. government. All money is not interchangeable and carries with it social meaning. This was certainly the case for the Russian-speaking Jewish workers who emphatically

maintained that they were not “personal workers” or “personal attendants,” which they perceived as an extremely stigmatized job category. Rather, professionals highlighted the source of their pay to construct their identities as “professional government workers,” much as they were in FSU where most paid workers worked for the government. Saints, by contrast, understood payment by the state rather than taking money from their low-income, elderly clients as an affirmation of their “good works.”

Professionals also experienced “dirty work” as more stigmatizing than saints. Most professionals were too embarrassed about bodily care to even discuss it. Galina explained that this was the most difficult and unpleasant part of her job:

It is very difficult. First I have to give him massages. Then I wash him, I dry him, and he asks that I put deodorant on under his armpits. Then he gets up and holding on he places his feet in the bathtub and I wipe him between each of his toes. Then I rub his legs with Vaseline. Then he has a special ointment for his skin and I rub it on his entire body... Then I dress him in full... This is very unpleasant work... I finally get him dressed and all of a sudden he has to go pee pee. I run for the basin, give it to him, and then empty it. This is very difficult work – difficult for your morale.

Professionalism did not provide Galina with a way to understand “dirty work” as dignified or satisfying the way sainthood did for Ata and the other saints. Professionals expressed less personal satisfaction from homecare work in general and, unlike saints, often spoke of clients who in some way wounded their dignity. Most stated that they would leave homecare if they could find a different job that paid the same. In contrast, saints interpreted these tasks as Christian service work that did not challenge their integrity.

### **EXPLAINING THE DISCURSIVE DIVIDE**

Now that we have seen what it means for workers to be a professional or saint experientially and the affect these discursive practices have on gender identities and the way workers perform some work tasks, how can we explain why some workers deploy

professionalism and others sainthood? Following Swidler (1986), these discursive practices are part of respondents' "tool kits." While religion was driven underground in the FSU, Russian Orthodoxy was reestablished institutionally in the late Soviet period and survived as part of the culture in Orthodox Christian republics such as Russia and Ukraine. Respondents, all with high level jobs prior to migrating, also had professional codes of conduct in their "toolkit." Yet neither discursive framing was deployed by respondents to explain their work pre-migration. No one said God had called them to be an engineer in the FSU nor did they spend time convincing me that being an engineer meant being a professional. Swidler argues that all discourses are not equally deployable or desirable in all contexts and depends on both the particular problem at hand that needs addressing and the institutional context within which individuals are acting.

Migration generates a series of problems that require heightened cultural work in order to address (Swidler 1989; Bourdieu 2000). Sergei, formerly a physicist, explained "There are a lot of complications in migration ... I had to find myself and really ask, Who can I be here? What is my place?" Workers seek a validation of positive identity and avoid work that is potentially identity threatening due to its low status relative to previous employment or due to dissonance with prevalent gender constructions (Leidner 2000; Ray 2000). The dramatic downward occupational mobility experienced by many immigrant careworkers from the FSU, where occupation was a salient identity maker, and the necessity of finding waged labor for survival, makes work a particularly problematic part of the resettlement process. Paid cleaning and caring labor was particularly stigmatized in the Soviet context as "servant" or even "slave" labor and was excluded from a system that favored "socially productive" labor. Finally, unpaid cleaning and caring labor was strongly marked as "women's work." Russian-speaking careworkers, because of both their migration experience and their channeling into low status jobs that are

potentially identity threatening, are in what Swidler calls “unsettled” times where actors perform more cultural or discursive work than in “settled” times in order to make sense of their new situation. For Sergei, Orthodox Christian discursive practices helped him answer his existential question in the following way: “There are things I miss about working in a lab with a team of scientists, but time has shown which is the right path and which is the wrong path. Doing this work [homecare] I am on the right path; it’s the path to God.”

In San Francisco where Russian-speaking immigrants do carework at such high rates, U.S. immigrant laws select workers by religious affiliation and channel them into homecare jobs through divergent religious settlement institutions that provide these immigrants not only with waged labor, but with divergent discursive tools for interpreting what doing carework means in terms of work and gender identities. These institutions powerfully influence the discursive practices of these immigrants allowing the meaning of caring and cleaning labor to be reinterpreted with respect to both the Soviet context and U.S. work hierarchies. They also allow for a reinterpretation of masculinity for the male saints and a new model of caregiving for the female professionals even if maintaining naturalized claims of care as feminine labor. Yet, why are settlement institutions so prominent in the lives of immigrant homecare workers?

First, Russian Orthodox and Jewish settlement organizations provide these immigrants with the cultural tools, albeit divergent ones, to construct a positive identity at work for which respondents like Sergei were already actively searching. While recognizing that the boundedness of an institutional environment is only relative and constantly shifting, Sewell (1992, 58) argues that institutions create “coherent” and “partially coherent landscapes of meaning.” JVS does this directly by training immigrants from the FSU on how to behave on the job market. Marina, the Resettlement Program Coordinator at JVS, asserted that even highly educated professionals from

the FSU “have never had to run a job search or go to a job interview. Even if they speak English, they do not know the language of an American job interview. They need training.” JVS provides this training helping refugees write resumes and learn to “market” themselves to potential employers. In this way, JVS provides Jewish refugees with a secular, Americanized version of professional discourse. JVS also encourages its members to take advantage of their job training courses for caregivers, English language, and other topics and to continue to do so over the course of many years as immigrants plan their “career path.” Carefully crafted CVs, certificates of course completion, and student ID cards were all institutionally supported symbols of professional status. Not only is professionalism part of being “successful” on the U.S. job market, but being a professional is a key part of Soviet Jewish identity where Jews were dramatically overrepresented in professional job categories and the Soviet intelligentsia (Slezkine 2004).

As the case of Ivan illustrated, the discourse of professionalism undermines a reinterpretation of hegemonic masculinity. JVS institutionally reinforced traditional gendered understandings of work. When I asked Marina if there was a difference between job placement for men and women, she quickly replied, “Oh, yes! Women are easier to place than men because women do carework.” She explained it was more likely for JVS placement counselors to suggest homecare work to women than to men because counselors might be “afraid of insulting a man.” While JRS’s professional model prevented men from reinterpreting standards of hegemonic masculinity, it validated professionalism as a care model for women.

Russian Orthodox settlement organizations while less formally organized than JRS also engaged in a set of institutional practices and provided a symbolic repertoire that allowed Russian-speaking immigrants to “reinvent” themselves. Because the Russian Orthodox

community in San Francisco has a long history of receiving immigrants from the FSU in its official capacity as the headquarters of the ROC Abroad, this community has a special emphasis on social work. Respondents who deployed sainthood attended religious services and especially the weekly church lunches held after Sunday services. They all stated that they learned of the possibility of doing homecare work from others they met at church gatherings. While saints did not attend religious services before migrating, they all said that the ROC in San Francisco provided them with a meeting place, a sense of community, and access to information about jobs, the U.S. medical system, and other types of practical information about how one navigates the U.S. system. While respondents varied on whether they felt spiritual guidance or religious training was an important aspect of their interaction with the ROC, they all understood religious belief to be a positive force, something to aspire to, and blamed their communist upbringing if they felt they had not fully assimilated religious teachings or did not regularly participate in religious rituals.

Second, Russian Orthodox organizations and JRS are a network of institutions that penetrate all aspects of immigrants' settlement process in San Francisco. Additionally these immigrants are dependent on these institutions for finding waged labor, a key element of survival. The inclination to learn the rules for successfully navigating within these two institutional realities is heightened for immigrants because they are the gatekeepers of necessary resources including a community of Russian-speakers and waged labor. In the case of JRS, participation with these institutions including JVS is required as a condition entry into the U.S. during the first four months. But respondents and social workers explain that many continue to interact with JRS for further job training classes, English language classes, and Jewish summer

schools and camps for children and grandchildren. Social networks are forged in these encounters making JRS a key broker in immigrants' access to community and work.

For Russian Orthodox immigrants, being part of the Russian Orthodox community was not required as a condition of entry, but these immigrants quickly realize that the ROC if not formally then informally run most of the organizations that service the Russian-speaking community. As, Yuri, the director of the largest of these organizations explained, "Well, many [of these organizations] are independent but really nothing happens in this town without the blessing of the bishop." In fact, Yuri's "independent" organization was founded in the meeting room of one of the local ROCs. He explained that there is extensive overlap among the board members of these organizations, most of whom also hold Church appointments. As a result users of these services, whether Russian boy scouts, Russian Women's League, or meals-on-wheels, are strongly encouraged to attend church functions. In fact, several respondents said they were advised to go to the church as soon as they arrived and only then did they learn about the other service organizations available. The director of the missionary board for one of the ROCs, an American of Russian ancestry, noted, "The Church is not just interested in providing resettlement services. We want to fill the Churches."

For Dmitrii, the ROC was more than "just" resettlement services. He explained that the church was the center of his life here in the United States. It was the source of his housing: Dmitrii lived in church housing set aside especially for immigrants from the FSU over 50 years-old. The ROC was the source of his employment: Dmitrii was paid by the church to work as a part-time janitor and he found his way to the IHSS office where he works as a homecare worker 30 hours a week through other church members. Finally, church is the center of his social and spiritual life: Dmitrii attends services, lunches, and other church activities regularly. While

Dmitrii is an extreme case, no other respondent lived in ROC housing or was on the ROC payroll, we see how the ROC becomes the gatekeeper of vital resources and community connections for many non-Jewish immigrants and why the discourses of Orthodox Christianity and its language of morality might become prominent in the daily lives of these immigrants.

Finally, immigration scholars have recently emphasized the role of receiving institutions in shaping immigrants' experiences and the special role that religious institutions play in the United States (Warner and Wittner 1998). Menjivar (2003) in a study of Catholic and Evangelical Salvadoran immigrants in three different U.S. cities argues that regardless of the radical differences between the three cities in the study, it was the differences between the Catholic and Evangelical Churches that were important in understanding the divergent identities and strategies for integration developed by Salvadorans. Given that caring labor is increasingly being outsourced to immigrants in the United States, it is perhaps not surprising that religious institutions are also important institutional actors in how Soviet immigrants understand homecare work.

### **STRADDLING THE INSTITUTIONAL DIVIDE**

Not all respondents fell neatly into the category of professional or saint. One respondent, Nina, straddled two institutional realities and therefore crossed discourses. Despite her Orthodox Christian religious affiliation, Nina deployed a discourse of professionalism similar to those of the Jewish refugees. Nina came to San Francisco in 2000 at the age of sixty-two. She worked as a skilled pattern-cutter, a well respected profession in the FSU, until her factory closed. While Nina is Ukrainian, her only daughter married a Jew whose parents and siblings had immigrated to San Francisco years ago as refugees. Nina and her family came to join her son-in-law's family. Her daughter and son-in-law arrived as refugees, while Nina arrived as part of the family

reunification program. The Jewish side of the family settled Nina and her family in San Francisco and explained how things operated in the United States. Nina's in-laws found the apartment she lives in with her daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren and even furnished it. They also found work for her and her daughter:

We went to clean apartments. We were not ashamed. My daughter and I can do any work. . . . In the first three months, I lost thirty pounds without the help of a doctor or any pills. It was very difficult on the morale. People at home thought, "America, that's high-class," but none of us knew that upon arriving in America we would be cleaning other people's toilets.

When I spoke with her, Nina was working over fifty hours a week as a homecare worker caring for three sets of clients.

Like the professionals, Nina staunchly asserted her identity as a government worker. She told me of an argument she had with the wife of one of her clients. The wife claimed that her husband never suffered from diarrhea until she hired Nina. Nina explained her response:

I said to her, "First of all, you did not hire me, the American government hired me and you should be grateful to the American government that you live so well. . . . You need to remember that I am not your maid; I'm your social worker. These are two different things. You pay the maid, but here the government pays me, and I even have a union."

Nina used the source of her pay and her union membership to establish her prestige. It also moved her work from the private sphere to the public sphere invoking a set of professional understandings of her labor.

Unlike other professionals, Nina was aware of the alternative Christian framing and she believed that this approach gave her more power in disagreements with her clients than that of Orthodox Christianity which structured the relationship between worker and client as familial. Nina said:

I think that in this type of work you have to maintain a relationship as worker and client. Maybe if money was not involved you could do things differently.... I think that work should not include this type of “you are my blood” or “God says I should do this” ideas because if there is some type of conflict – and there will be – how can you clash as two grown people? It is most important that everyone know their place. We need to know we are workers and they need to know they are clients.

Nina was well versed in the Orthodox Christian orientation to clients, but she rejected Orthodox Christianity as a discursive framing for her work. Touching the gold cross she wore around her neck, Nina qualified her religious status stating, “I am not an atheist, but I am not a strong believer.” This sentiment played out in a phone call Nina received from a friend during the interview. The friend invited Nina to a church luncheon that weekend. When she hung up, Nina said that her friend simply did not understand that she could not go to those church events anymore. She went to religious services so rarely that it seemed the only time she went to church was because of a free lunch. Her friend did not see this as a problem, but Nina felt it was not right. She struggled with the dual role of the ROC as a religious and social institution and debated whether taking advantage of the social activities was morally justifiable without embracing the religious activities as well.

Nina straddled two institutional realities. Although she herself did not arrive through JRS, she did use many of its services indirectly through her family connections. Her migration experience was closer to the experience of the Jewish refugees than the Orthodox Christian immigrants. On the other hand, after finding work and a place to live, Nina began to integrate into the Russian-speaking community through Church-sponsored social events. Thus, she had access to the discursive and material resources of both institutional settings. Her unique position between these two institutional worlds provided her with the possibility of mobilizing either professionalism or sainthood.

A number of factors may have led Nina to choose professionalism over sainthood. First, her immigration process was closer to that of Jewish refugees. Second, Nina worried about how closely she should affiliate with the Church given her own beliefs and diverse family. Despite the many nationalities of Russian-speaking immigrants, the ROC attempts to bring this community together around a common religion. Nina felt that the Jewish side of her family was left out of this community-building strategy, which may have motivated her to refuse its discursive frame. Third, Nina believes professionalism gives her more power in managing conflict on the job than sainthood. While we cannot know for sure why Nina chose one framing over the other, it is telling that she perceived only two choices. Nina's case illustrates that the possible discourses deployable for understanding homecare work are circumscribed and closely tied to institutional settings.

## CONCLUSION

Soviet immigrants are selected by religious affiliation and filtered into two different sets of resettlement institutions—Jewish Resettlement Services and Russian Orthodox organizations— upon arriving to San Francisco providing them with divergent discursive tools and practices producing professionals and saints. While these two sets of discursive practices led to differing ways of performing and experiencing carework, both discursive practices allowed workers to distance themselves from being categorized as a personal or domestic “servant.” Agencies such as IHSS play an important part in allowing homecare workers to distance themselves from “servant” identities. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's attempt to illuminate IHSS in California or policy directions that give clients money or vouchers to pay caregivers directly would reinforce the domestic servant image making it more difficult for both men and women to perform this important caring labor.

The divergent discursive practices of professionalism and sainthood also allow for varying renegotiations of gendered understandings of carework. While professionalism did not lead women in this study to engage in deep renegotiations of femininity, it did lead to work practices that are unexpected given the literature on gender and care. These women did not emphasize personal relationships, emotion work, or nurturing behavior when discussing their work. Rather, they emphasized work contracts, technical skills and certification, and created boundaries between professional and personal relationships – all behaviors the literature associate with men’s “unique” way of providing care. Surprisingly, while studies find that men who care for family members are likely to operate within a “professional model” of care, for the men in this study, professionalism was incompatible with hegemonic notions of masculinity. Professionalized discourse made it difficult for placement counselors at JVS to suggest that a man consider homecare work as a valid work alternative even while easily calling the women who did this work ‘professionals’ and part of JVS’s success in placing refugees. Russian Orthodox discursive practices on the other hand, allowed men to reinterpret hegemonic notions of masculinity and see homecare work as manly work that follows in Jesus’ footsteps. While even Russian Orthodox men are not becoming homecare workers in great numbers, church members felt comfortable suggesting that men consider homecare jobs and at least some men felt able to accept them.

The dominant view among feminists who study paid domestic labor is that familial constructions of paid domestic work lead to the greater exploitation of workers because greater claims can be made on them by employers in the name of “family obligation” (Romero 1992). They further argue that workers must define themselves as professionals to increase the status of domestic work (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Romero 1992; Salzinger 1991). While professionals in

this study were more likely to join the union and fight for well-deserved benefits such as a living wage and health insurance, these data also suggest that careworkers experience less job satisfaction when they constructed themselves as professionals. Additionally, professionalism reinforced hegemonic notions of masculinity making it near impossible for male professionals to do homecare work at all. The larger feminist project of inviting men to take on paid carework may be undermined by campaigns to “professionalize” carework, ensuring that paid domestic labor will continue to be disproportionately shouldered by women. Men are often willing to take lower-paying, less secure jobs without benefits or chose unemployment rather than take a relatively “better” job in homecare when notions of masculinity cannot be reinterpreted. While improving homecare jobs is important, this alone will not attract men to carework unless they operate within an institutional setting that also allows them room to renegotiate notions of masculinity.

Finally, as low-waged carework is increasingly outsourced to immigrant workers, new institutional actors such as religious organizations must be brought into the feminist debate about how gender, nationality, and discursive practices play out in care jobs. The prominence that religious institutions have in the settlement of Soviet immigrants that come to the United States with little religious experience or training may suggest that for immigrant groups who came from non-communist countries with an uninterrupted religious tradition such Central and South America, religious institutions may be even more important in understanding their integration into local pockets of the globalizing care industry.

---

\* AUTHOR’S NOTE: *I thank Michael Burawoy for his sustained enthusiasm throughout the span of this project and for reading and providing invaluable insights on multiple drafts of this paper. I also thank Barrie Thorne, Victoria Bonnell and Ann Swidler for their encouragement and feedback. This research was funded by a grant from the University of California’s Institute for Labor and Employment.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Miller and Kaufman (1996) found that the variation in tasks that men and women perform diminish when men and women are caring for an ill spouse even if men and women still talk about caring labor differently.

<sup>2</sup> Explanations for why women and men perform carework differently can be grouped as individual level theories such as psychoanalytic theory (Chodorow 1982, Williams 1989), broad-based institutional explanations that attribute these differences to men and women's differing positions in work places and families (Hoschchild 1997, Risman 1998) and interactional approaches that look at how people "do gender" (West and Zimmerman 1987, DeVault 1991).

<sup>3</sup> In a rare look at skilled carework, Williams (1989) found that men in the female-dominated profession of nursing distinguished themselves from female nurses by emphasizing physical strength and technical training leading to men's overrepresentation in certain nursing specialties such as psychiatric nursing where patients may have to be subdued and restrained by force.

<sup>4</sup> All names are pseudonyms.

<sup>5</sup> Dasha is the diminutive term for the name "Dmitrii" and Sasha is the diminutive for "Alexander." These are informal terms of endearment.

<sup>6</sup> Other Orthodox Christian respondents similarly answered this question by saying they were "Russian," even if they were not Russian nationals. For them, Russian-ness and Orthodox Christianity were closely associated. Christians and Jews alike still follow Soviet nationality policies which considered "Jewish" a nationality rather than a religion. This means that Jews born in Russia are not considered Russian nationals but Jewish by nationality.

<sup>7</sup> *Blat* refers to the system of informal contacts and personal networks used to obtain goods and services especially during the Soviet era.

## REFERENCES

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 2000. Pascalian meditations. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Chodorow, Nancy. 1978. The reproduction of mothering: Psychoanalysis and the sociology of gender. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Connell, R.W. 1995. Masculinities. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Delp, L., and K. Quan. 2002. Homecare worker organizing in California: An analysis of a successful strategy. *Labor Studies Journal* 27: 1-23.
- DeVault, Marjorie L. 1991. Feeding the family: The social organization of caring as gendered work. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fitting, M., P. Rabins, M.J. Lucas, and J. Eastman. 1986. Caregivers for dementia patients: A comparison of husbands and wives. *The Gerontologist* 26: 248-252.
- Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. 1986. Issei, Nisei, War Bride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Gold, Steven. J. 1995. From the Workers' State to the Golden State: Jews from the Former Soviet Union in California. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 1983. The managed heart: The commercialization of human feeling. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 1997. The time bind: When work becomes home and home becomes work. New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette. 2001. Domestica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Horowitz, Amy. 1985. Sons and daughters as caregivers to older parents: Differences in role performance and consequences. *The Gerontologist* 36: 483-491.
- Hughes, Everett Cherrington. 1971. The sociological eye: Selected papers. Chicago: Aldine-Atherton.

- 
- Jutras, S., and F. Veilleux. 1991. Gender role and care giving to the elderly: An empirical study. *Sex Roles* 25: 1-18.
- Leidner, Robin. 1993. Fast food, fast talk: Service work and the routinization of everyday life. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Menjívar, Cecilia. 2003. Religion and Immigration in Comparative Perspective: Catholic and Evangelical Salvadorans in San Francisco, Washington, D.C., and Phoenix. *Sociology of Religion* 64: 21-45.
- Miller, B., and J. E. Kaufman. 1996. Beyond gender stereotypes: Spouse caregivers of persons with dementia. *Journal of Aging Studies* 10: 189-204.
- Parrenas, Rhacel Salazar. 2001. *Servants of globalization: Women, migration and domestic work*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Ray, Raka. 2000. Masculinity, femininity and servitude: Domestic workers in Calcutta in the late twentieth century. *Feminist Studies* 26: 691-718.
- Raymond, Boris, and David R. Jones. 2000. The Russian diaspora, 1917-1941. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow.
- Risman, Barbara J. 1998. Gender vertigo: American families in transition. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press.
- Romero, Mary. 1992. Maid in the U.S.A. New York: Routledge.
- Salzinger, L. 1991. A maid by any other name: the transformation of "dirty work" by Central American immigrants. In Ethnography unbound: Power and resistance in the modern metropolis, edited by M. Burawoy. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sewell, W. 1992. The concept(s) of culture. In Beyond the cultural turn: New directions in the study of society and culture, edited by V. Bonnell and L. Hunt. Berkeley, University of Berkeley Press.
- Slezkine, Yuri. 2004. The Jewish century. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Strauss, Anselm, and Corbin, Juliet. 1990. Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Swidler, Ann. 1986. Culture in action: Symbols and strategies. *American Sociological Review*, 51: 273-86.
- Thompson, E. H. 2002. What's unique about men's caregiving. In Men as caregivers: Theory, research, and service implications, edited by B. J. Kramer and E. H. Thompson. New York: Springer Publishing Company, Inc.
- Valian, Virginia. 1999. Why so slow?: The advancement of women. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Warner, R. S., and J.D. Wittner, editors. 1998. Gatherings in diaspora: Religious communities and the new immigration. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Wertheimer, J. 1995. Jewish organizational life in the United States since 1945. In American Jewish yearbook 1995, vol 95, edited by D. Singer and R. Selden. New York: The American Jewish Committee.
- West, C., and D. H. Zimmerman. 1987. Doing Gender. *Gender & Society* 1: 125-151
- Williams, Christine L. 1989. Gender differences at work: Women and men in nontraditional occupations. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- . 1995. Still a man's world: Men who do "women's" work. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.