

Psychological Counselling in Russia: The Making of a Feminised Profession

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the development of the profession of psychological counselling post-1989 in Russia and analyses how gender shapes the processes of feminisation and professionalisation in this field. The post-perestroika period saw a rapid rise in the popularity of psychology and the expansion of therapy services, which were banned before 1989 for ideological reasons (Balachova et al. 2001; 2004; Sukhodolsky et al. 1995; Vasilieva 2000). Although the attitudes towards counselling are still ambivalent due to its link to the notorious legacy of psychiatric services in the Soviet Union (Bloch and Reddaway 1977; 1984; Cohen 1989; Etkind 1997), nevertheless, since its emergence, the new profession immediately became trendy, rather well-paid and female-dominated. Drawing on 26 semi-structured interviews with practising psychologists in two Russian cities (Moscow and Vladivostok), I investigate the process of professionalisation of this female-dominated field in a transitional society and show how and why it became feminised. In the analytical chapters of this thesis I examine professional education, working practices, regulation and infrastructure, and counsellors' views on the role of gender in their profession. I analyse how the counsellors' entry opportunities into the profession are gendered, aged and classed. I discuss the challenges that the counsellors face when working in the state, private and informal sectors of the economy and how their working choices and opportunities are structured by gender. Further, I analyse how the counsellors see the work of gender in their profession and unpack the relationship between these gendered discourses and realities to show how they shape the development of the profession and the gender distribution in it. Finally, I look at the state of professional regulation in psychology, consider how it is perceived by practitioners, and how organisational experiences can be different for men and women. My findings reveal that the development of the profession is structured by the interplay of a certain gender ideology, professional specificities, and the larger social, economic and historic context of Russia. I demonstrate how the development of psychological counselling is a complex process, embedded in a particular socio-cultural environment and shaped by structural and interactive forces. This thesis is the first comprehensive study of the counselling profession in post-1989 Russia and extends the understanding of the feminisation of the professions in transitional societies.

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Introduction

Since the late 1980s Russia has been going through the crisis of the transition. The demise of the Soviet Union brought about manifold changes in the political, economic, cultural and other spheres of life (see Ashwin 2000b; Brainerd 1998; Boettke 1999; Hendley 1997; Humphrey 2001; Fleron 1996; Mroz and Popkin 1995; Shleifer and Treisman 2000; White, A. 2004 etc.). The state-controlled economy was replaced by the new market driven system which resulted in many changes, particularly in the labour market. One of the outcomes was the modification of the professional market and the emergence of new occupations. In this thesis I investigate the development of the profession of psychological counselling during the transitional period in Russia. Particularly, I explore how gender has shaped the processes of feminisation and professionalisation of this field.

In this Introduction I shall first briefly outline the background for the development of psychological counselling in Russia. I then explain my choice of focus for this project, and my personal interest and motivation for doing this research. Afterwards I provide a review of the main theoretical debates on women in the Russian labour market, gender and feminisation, and the feminisation of psychology. I shall situate my research in this array of scholarly literature and identify its contribution. The final section of the Introduction provides an outline of the chapters of this thesis.

Setting the Scene

Professions as any other social institutions and phenomena are embedded in historical and cultural contexts. Psychological counselling and psychotherapy as a type of service did not exist in the Soviet Union. Treating mental disorders (should such arise) was the domain of psychiatry which had a rather controversial position due to its amalgamation with the system of punishment (Bloch and Reddaway 1977; Bonnie 2002; Cohen 1989; Koryagin 1989; Windholz 1999). Psychology was mostly a scientific field which was also imbricated in the dominant ideology. Its theoretical inquiries and methods were closely monitored for their ideological suitability and appropriateness and therapeutic interventions were not practised (Kozulin 1984; McLeish 1975; Sukhodolsky et al. 1995). In the late 1980s practising psychotherapy and counselling became legal (Vasilieva 2000) and when the state ideological control over science reduced after the collapse of the Soviet Union both counselling psychology and psychotherapy began to develop rapidly, gaining influence in Russian society.

The rise of psychology was also prompted by the social mayhem that Russia saw in the 1990s. Dramatic changes did not only affect people's economic well-being but also had an impact on their psychological state. The blows of the crisis during the transitional period were first and foremost received by the general public. People lived in the atmosphere of a catastrophe. Very high unemployment rates, poverty and crime, economic instability, housing and food shortages were just some of the numerous problems of everyday life (Ashwin 2000a; 2000b; Humphrey 2001; Mroz and Popkin 1995). In an instant, all the reference points in life had been lost: the Soviet regime was gone and with it a certain sense of stability. Many new reforms had disappointing results. People reported such feelings as a loss of confidence in the future, helplessness, disbelief, fear, a sense of anarchy and disaster (Eremicheva 1996; Vasilieva 2000). The level of alcohol and drug abuse, suicide and mental illness rates increased dramatically during those years (Krasnov and Gurovich 2007). Many turned to religion, cults, psychics and anyone who promised at least some clear-cut advice and guidance. As one of my interviewees said¹:

Our society got into a state of social anomie, you know... First of all we suffered from a conflict of values... traditional values started losing their significance, and a new set of values has not been formed yet, that's why now we have what they call an existential vacuum - the lack of values in our society... And many people feel the necessity to figure out: 'What's right?'... So they start thinking: 'Who knows how to do it right? A psychologist must know! She'll know! And she will tell me what to do, and everything will be alright!'... [Clients] frequently ask a psychologist: 'And how should I do this? How can I do this *right*? What is the *right* way?' [laughs]. In Soviet times people knew what was 'right' [laughs]. (VF8)²

In this context psychology started to rapidly develop. By 2007 509 universities across Russia offered psychology degrees, 28 universities offered courses in clinical psychology. The number of psychology graduates increased by thousands, from roughly 27900 (including part-time) in 2003 to 76500 in 1998.³ Numerous private institutions offer courses and certificates in a variety of therapy approaches (Vasilieva 2000). Psychology is

¹ All translations from Russian are mine unless otherwise specified.

² In order to preserve the anonymity of my interviewees I assigned each of them a code. The first letter indicates the city where the interview was held (V for Vladivostok, M for Moscow). The second letter indicates the sex of the respondent (F for female, M for male). The number after the letters indicates the order of the interviews (1 for the first interview, 2 for the second etc.). For instance VF8 means that it is an excerpt from the interview number eight held in Vladivostok with a female psychologist.

³ Russian Education: Federal Portal <http://www.edu.ru/db/cgi-bin/portal/3nk_retro/list_1_1.pl?spe=&ter=&okato=&okogu=&fs=>. Accessed 22 October 2007.

also a very popular speciality for professional re-training⁴ (Karandashev 2006; Stevens and Wedding 2004; Yurevich 2006). The number of practising psychological counsellors went up from 2000 across Russia in 1993 (O'Neil 1993) to about 64000 counselling psychologists in Russia (Yurevich 2006). Ivanova (2008) cites the figure of 10000 specialists and 300 psychological centres in Moscow alone in 2009.⁵ Psychologists are now employed in education, medicine, business, marketing, politics and many other sectors of the economy and there is still a shortage of specialists in the field (Karandashev 1998; Osokov et al. 2003). Their salaries depend on the sector where they work but generally are above the average national wage level⁶ and reach 2500 GBP a month in certain fields (Balachova et al. 2004; Taranov 2007).

One indication that psychology is gaining in importance as a source of expert advice in Russia is its omnipresence in contemporary Russian society. There is a vast amount of popular self-help psychological literature in the book shops. There is constant media attention on psychological issues: psychologists feature as experts in various TV shows and programs; they are interviewed for newspapers and magazines on the range of different topics.⁷ The amount and range of psychological services is constantly increasing. Psychologists are now required everywhere from kindergartens to beauty salons⁸. Research suggests (Balachova et al. 2001; Martynova 2007) that the demand for counselling and psychotherapy is extremely high in Russia today and this was confirmed by all my interviewees.

Interestingly, the psychologists who provide counselling services (privately and in the state institutions) are mostly women. A study of Russian psychologists completed in 2006 reported that 72,1% of specialists were women (Mileshkina 2007).⁹ Undergraduate psychology is female-dominated (Karandashev 1998). According to the Russian Federal

⁴ By professional re-training I mean acquiring an additional university degree by people who already have a degree in a different field but want to re-train as psychologists. I provide a detailed explanation of the Russian education system in Chapter 1.

⁵ One of the biggest challenges for this research was the lack of the official statistics on the number of psychologists in Russia. State statistics are only available for fields of work and not the professions (see www.gks.ru). The numbers given in the literature are tentative. Balachova et al. (2004: 301) for instance estimate the number of clinical psychologists at 5000, psychologists working in the Ministry of Internal Affairs at 8500 and psychologists working in education at 64000 (but there is no mention of the source for these figures). There is also no mention of psychologists who practice in the private sector. The latter number is difficult to gauge because as I show later in this thesis (Chapter 2) many psychologists have multiple jobs or have an unregistered practice (in the informal sector). There are also no official registers of specialists.

⁶ The average wage in Russia in August 2008 was RUB16488 (about £340) a month according to the Federal Service of State Statistics. Available at <<http://www.gks.ru/dbscripts/Cbsd/DBInet.cgi>>. Accessed 13 November 2008.

⁷ I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 1.

⁸ One of my interviewees had an office in a beauty salon which advertised her services as a part of their wellness programme.

⁹ When doing this project, it was almost impossible to find any gender statistics on the number of male and female psychologists in Russia. The official statistics (www.gks.ru) provide only general numbers if at all. This relates to the general problem of the under-development of gender statistics in Russia. These issues have been voiced by several scholars and still seem to be unresolved (see Baskakova 2004; Belokonnaya 2000).

State Statistics Service¹⁰ women constituted 74% of graduate students and 70% of doctoral students in psychology in 2005. The majority of re-trainers in psychology are also women (see Chapter 3). I also found that of 80 counselling centres advertised online, 60 were headed by women and the majority of employees were also women.¹¹

The applications of psychology are manifold and, as a rule, psychologists hold several jobs in various spheres (Mileshkina 2007; O'Neil 1993; Vasilieva 2000). However, specialists in psychology can be roughly divided into those who mainly do scientific research and those who mainly provide various kinds of psychological services. In my thesis, I focus particularly on researching the experiences of female and male psychologists who mainly work with clients and provide psychological counselling¹² services. My decision to explore this cohort was informed by several factors. First, psychological counselling is a new profession in Russia (scientific psychology, although suppressed, still existed in the Soviet state) and it is exactly this applied side of psychology that is thriving in Russia at the moment. Second, not only is counselling a new developing field, it is also usually exercised in the form of a private practice: the kind of employment that used to be illegal until the collapse of the Soviet Union. The nature of this new profession is also problematic: on the one hand it bears the notorious legacy of the Soviet psychiatric services, and on the other it is in much demand in contemporary society. Investigating psychological counselling is also an opportunity to analyse the mechanisms of the emergence of a feminised profession in the transitional context. Finally, my interest in this field and the questions about its development were triggered by my personal experience: I myself have a first degree in psychology from a Russian university.

Personal Interest

I graduated with a degree in psychology, with a specialisation in clinical psychology from the Far Eastern National University, which is located in one of the most remote cities of Russia: Vladivostok. When I was first introduced to psychological counselling and psychotherapy I was fascinated by the subject. Later during my internships I was further thrilled by the potential of this profession to improve one's quality of life through personal change. I really saw it work and experienced how powerful cognitive exercises can be. I

¹⁰ Federal State Statistics Service <http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/B06_50/IssWWW.exe/Stg/03-12.htm>. Accessed 24 January 2008.

¹¹ This research was done in the Spring of 2007. I entered 'psychological centre' and 'psychological help' into Google and looked at the 80 random psychological centres advertised online (in the order in which they were listed).

¹² By counselling I mean both individual counselling and group counselling, done in the private, state or informal sector. For detailed definition of the terms see Chapter 1.

saw how challenging, demanding and tiring it can be to achieve a therapeutic effect but how good it feels when a client smiles and you know that at least one thing in his or her life will change for the better. At the same time, a variety of inconsistencies between the reality of counsellors' work and the images and discourses around it puzzled me. Why, for instance, are the majority of people apprehensive of using these services when they clearly help? Why is such highly skilled and demanding work under-appreciated? Why do the majority of specialists encounter and complain about similar problems but never do anything about them? Why are the majority of my colleagues women, and most of all, why is women's contribution to the development of this profession rarely appreciated?

From studying plenty of extensive classical texts in psychology during my undergraduate study, I had a 'standard' image of a psychotherapist in my head: a middle-age man, with a beard, smoking a pipe and listening to a patient lying on the couch. However, my study and work experience revealed a different reality. There were five men among the 50 students in my class. Most of my professors were women as was the head of department. During the years of my degree, in every class, every workshop and every conference that I took part in there were mostly women. I have also seen a diversity of work settings: I worked in a mental hospital, in two psychological counselling centres and as an assistant in personnel management in one of the big companies in my city. There was one thing that these workplaces had in common: most of the psychologists were women. Throughout those years I had the chance to meet many brilliant and talented counsellors and psychotherapists who influenced me personally and gave me inspiration for further intellectual and professional development. Most of them were women.

Notwithstanding that the field is clearly female-dominated I can recall a clear tendency to ignore this fact and not to acknowledge women's input in the field in general. For example, we were taught virtually no theories by female psychologists in the curriculum. Sometimes even though the theory was in the textbook it was skipped due to its seeming lack of relevance to counselling practice or just because there were 'more important' issues to consider. This may have been a coincidence or a part of the 'trend' to omit female theorists' contributions (Bohan 1990; Hogan et al. 1998); whatever it was, it gave the impression that theory was a male domain and we as (female) students just had to learn to practise it.

Gender issues never featured in any conversations about professional practice either. Our discussions of professional difficulties were about the imperfections of the legislation, the lack of clients or specialists' low level of qualifications. When at one of the practical workshops a female student raised the question about its inconvenient timing because she had no one to leave her two children with, the response was something like:

‘Well, ladies, let’s not waste time on the discussion of personal matters here, everyone has to deal with problems’. In the conversations women often mentioned being constantly overwhelmed by juggling home and work but all the discussions ended with scolding the government and ‘getting on’ with coping with their hectic lifestyles. The personal was never seen to have anything to do with professional. Gender issues were never emphasised because there were always ‘more important things’.¹³

Frankly speaking, although during my studies I did notice a certain cleavage between the textbook images of the profession and its reality, it did not seem too unusual. Moreover, I knew no ways to articulate what the problem was until I entered a graduate course in gender studies at the Central European University, Hungary. Reading classic texts by Sylvia Walby, Joan Acker, Harriet Bradley, Arlie Hochschild and other prominent scholars had a deep impact on me personally and on my understanding of the genderisation of work. At that time I decided that I was going to do some research on psychology in Russia. However, when I went back home and told my former colleagues that I wanted to do a PhD on the experiences of female counsellors from a feminist perspective my excitement was not widely shared. Some said that it is not right to focus only on women. In response to my argument that there *are* mostly women in the profession the usual answer was that it did not matter because ‘research is supposed to be objective’. As for my ‘feminist perspective’ one of my former professors said, ‘Well... I hope your department is not too radically feminist...’ Another colleague of mine put it more directly, ‘You are intelligent, well educated and you are a psychologist... Why would you possibly do *that*?’ These responses did not really surprise me, but got me thinking about several issues. In spite of all the work that women do in psychology, in spite of the fact that they are the main driving force in this profession why does much of their effort remain unrecognized? In many psychology textbooks one can read phrases such as, ‘Psychology has traditionally been a male-dominated discipline at all levels of the profession and scholarship’ (Nicolson 1992: 9). Why isn’t this the case in Russia and why isn’t this fact ‘a big deal’ for the professionals? Or is it?

There have been no systematic studies of this profession in Russia. As I discuss in the next section of this chapter, most research that has been done is of a quantitative nature and involves only survey data (e.g. Dontsov and Belokrylova 1999; Mileshekina 2007; Yurevich 2006). Moreover, the research that exists is gender blind despite the feminised nature of the profession. Therefore the aim of my study is in part to fill this gap and bring in the experiences and views of female psychologists. In my research I analyse the ways in

¹³ This, as scholars show, was (and is) a typical ‘excuse’ to escape the discussion of gender issues in Russia (see Kerig et al. 1993).

which gender shapes the processes of the professionalisation and development of psychological counselling in contemporary Russia. In order to understand these mechanisms I shall examine the professional education, working conditions, and the counsellors' views about the role of gender in their profession and the process of professionalisation in the context of the transitional economy of Russia. But before I proceed, I shall first review the existing research in order to outline the theoretical framework for my project and to identify the place in and contributions of my thesis to the existing scholarship.

Literature Review

The main purpose of this literature review is to identify the theoretical framework of my research, situate my research contribution within the existing literature and point out the issues which my project seeks to expand on and the gaps it aims to fill. In the literature review I shall therefore identify the main debates on the issues of women's position in the Russian labour market, discuss the key arguments in feminisation studies and review the existing literature about the profession of psychological counselling in Russia. Because this thesis is interdisciplinary and explores a number of different areas related to the development of the profession of psychological counselling (e.g. gender and professional education, gender and work, gendered discourses in psychological counselling, the process of professionalisation) specific literatures relevant to these topics will be reviewed in the relevant chapters, where I continue to engage with specific debates and provide analysis and critiques of that research. This literature review starts with the review of debates about the role of women's gains in the sphere of paid employment during the Soviet period. Then I discuss women's status in the labour market during the transition and outline the factors which currently affect women's position in employment. I then proceed to an overview of work on the feminisation of the professions and identify the main conceptual frameworks of theorising its causes and effects for occupational structures. Finally, I review existing studies on women in psychology and in the mental health professions in Russia.

Women in the Soviet Labour Market

The majority of Russian women have always worked, although the nature and the type of this work were shaped by particular historical, political and economic specificities. The immense loss of men in the First and Second World Wars and during the repressions of the

Stalinist regime (1922-1953), and the Soviet ideology of women's emancipation and equality in the labour market (Bridger et al. 1996: 16; Buckley 1981; Rimashevskaja 1992) led to a dramatic increase in the number of women in paid labour in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century. By the 1970s about 60%¹⁴ of workers in professional occupations¹⁵ in the USSR were women (Sacks 1976: 74). In the late 1970s about 90% of women were either working full-time or in education (Bridger et al. 1996). In the early 1990s women outnumbered men in the labour market by 52 to 48% (Fong 1993: 14).

Research analysis of the Soviet period commonly focus on the role of labour market policies and their efficacy in promoting equality for women in paid employment. At issue is whether the considerable engagement of women in the labour market under the Soviet regime altered the fundamental gender inequalities in the workplace. These debates are important to consider here because the influence of the ideological, cultural and structural heritage of the Soviet period still persists today and conditions the development of professions and women's position in the Russian labour market.

According to the state's propaganda, women in the Soviet Union had full equality in the sphere of paid employment (Ashwin 2006b). However, many researchers question this claim. Some argue that the 'emancipation' of women was hardly driven by any motives except economic necessity (Buckley 1981; Einhorn 1993: 127). Furthermore, Szalai (1991: 153) states (for the case of Hungary) that women were obliged to work because 'the rights based on citizenship were substituted by ones based on having regular and continuous employment'. Jyrkinen-Pakkasvirta (1996: 4) provides the same argument for Russia, clarifying that most of the benefits that families could get (e.g. access to childcare facilities, health care, pensions etc.) depended on and were organized through workplace. Such factors as the impossibility to sustain a household on a single breadwinner income, lack of opportunities to work part-time, or to opt out of the labour force also added to the mandatory character of paid employment (Einhorn 1993; Linz 1995; Sacks 1976).

Despite extensive employment and the wide representation of women in many occupations, both horizontal and vertical segregation persisted in the Soviet job market (Buckley 1981; Dodge 1978; Einhorn 1993; Khotkina 1994; Rimashevskaja 1992; 1994; Silverman and Yanovich 2000). For example, women were excluded from about 20% of jobs by protective legislation: they were not allowed to work in certain jobs (e.g. certain heavy industries, night work) due to hazardous conditions (Khotkina 1994: 94). This, as

¹⁴ The statistics vary slightly according to different sources (e.g. Bridger et al 1996; Kiblitckaya 2000b; McMahon 1994; Sacks 1975; Silverman and Yanovich 2000).

¹⁵ Sacks (1976: 75) divides the occupations into non-professional or manual, professional and semi-professional – the latter two are those that primarily require 'mental' labour. Most professional occupations require a university degree.

some scholars claim, prevented women from taking up some prestigious (at that time) and highly paid occupations (McMahon 1994; Jyrkinen-Pakkasvirta 1996) and later in the transition limited the number of job possibilities for them (Einhorn 1993: 121). Furthermore, despite the existence of positive discrimination (quotas for women's participation) women still faced the 'glass ceiling' and were under-represented in top managerial positions and among political elites (Einhorn 1993: 124; Lapidus 1975; McMahon 1994: 65; Racioppi and See 1995). Finally, women were mainly represented in the service sector occupations and light industry which had less prestige and paid less than heavy industries and blue-collar jobs where men dominated (Rzhanitsyna 2000, McMahon 1994; Silverman and Yanovich 1997). Education, medicine, clerical work, certain branches of science, planning and communications have traditionally been female-dominated and as a rule paid less (Buckley 1981; Katz 1997; Sacks 1976). Research also indicates the existence of a pay gap in the Soviet Union: women's salaries were approximately 70% of men's (Bridger 1992; Chapman 1978; Fong 1993; McAuley 1981).

The gender segregation and inequalities in the labour market were upheld and reinforced by the official gender ideology and social conditions. Women were 'deemed to have a demographical duty to the state' as mothers (Ashwin 2006a: 33) and household work was also regarded as women's duty. These stereotypes were deeply internalised by women themselves (Ashwin 2002; 2006b; Fong 1993). Together with the mandatory character of paid employment this resulted in the 'double burden' which was reinforced by poor infrastructure, shortages of food supplies, queues, and long working hours (Khotkina 1994; Attwood 1996). The existing gender regime forced women into occupations that were constructed as 'appropriate' for women and their roles as mothers and carers. Gendered socialisation practices also strongly encouraged women to choose occupations which were compatible with their 'feminine' characteristics. Furthermore through forming quite negative attitudes towards career-driven women the state propaganda mainly oriented women to have 'just a job' and not to prioritize a career as their life-goal (Khotkina 1994: 105). To sum up, 'women were concentrated in lower status, low-paid jobs within lower status, low-paid sectors of the economy' (Einhorn 1993: 122; Katz 1997; Khotkina 1994).

In spite of the obvious shortcomings of the Soviet system there were nevertheless considerable achievements for women which cannot be dismissed. Women in Russia (and in many other Eastern European countries) constituted much higher numbers in paid employment than women in most capitalist economies (Pascal and Kwak 2005; Sacks 1976). Free and mostly accessible higher education, quotas, state-funded maternity leave, childcare facilities and other social benefits let women participate in the labour market at about the same rate as men (Gerber and Mayorova 2006: 2048). Women managed to get

into historically male-dominated professions like medicine and law, and represented significant percentages in engineering, construction, technical industries etc. (Einhorn 1993: 124; Sacks 1976). Thus, as Pascal and Kwak (2005: 39) point out, in spite of the gender segregation and existing wage gap, ‘gender equality at work under communism was more nearly approached than in most of Western Europe.’ The legacy of the Soviet regime is controversial and is difficult to assess unequivocally, but as I argue further in my thesis, it is important to unveil the mechanisms of its influence. In the subsequent chapters I show that the Soviet legacy still has power over the structures of the Russian labour market and that it continues to shape the ways in which people think about professional work. I will further engage with the debates about the importance of networks (Chapter 4) and gender regimes (Chapters 3 and 5), and analyse the influence of the Soviet legacy on the formation of the profession and professional organisations (Chapters 1 and 6).

Women in the Post-1990s Labour Market

In 1989-1990 the shift from a state-controlled to a market economy brought about changes such as privatisation, marketisation and welfare cuts (to name a few) which significantly influenced women’s position in the Russian labour market. One of the main questions discussed in literature was whether women were ‘losers’ or ‘winners’ in the transitional period. Research (Attwood 1996; Brainerd 1998; Bridger et al. 1996; Einhorn 1993; Kay 2000; Silverman and Yanovich 2000) suggests that women were significantly disadvantaged during the transition and had more difficulty adjusting to the changes than men. The change in the economy led to a dramatic increase in unemployment and women were the first in the ‘queue’ for redundancy and lay-offs (Einhorn 1993). In 1991 about 70-80% of registered unemployed people were women (Khotkina 1994: 98). Moreover, hidden forms of unemployment such as long unpaid leave, wage arrears or forced part-time work affected women more than men (Mezentseva 2004; Izyumov and Razumnova 2000). The wage gap in the post-Soviet period widened (Brainerd 1998; 2000; Lehmann and Wadsworth 2001). Other factors that added to women’s disadvantageous position in the labour market were considerable state welfare cuts and the deterioration of childcare facilities (Ashwin 2006a; Bridger 1992), and an increase in open discrimination in the workplace and in hiring practices (Degtiar 2000; Gerber and Mayorova 2006; Mezentseva 1994). Although the laws on equal opportunities formally exist, they are often not observed and the system of legal control (especially over private firms’ hiring practices) is too weak to police such violations (Izyumov and Razumnova 2000; Rzhantsyna 2000). ‘Questions

of gender equality (in pay and job opportunities) have been regarded as superfluous luxuries in the serious business of transition – a male prerogative’ (Pollert 2003: 345).

However, some scholars suggest that women were not primarily losers in the new economic structure (Ashwin 2006a; Gerber and Mayorova 2006). Firstly, several authors (Ashwin and Bowers 1997; Mezentseva 2004) point out that one of the reasons for the statistical difference in unemployment rates is that men were less willing to register with the official unemployment agencies due to higher social pressure on them as primary breadwinners. That is why the proportion of women who are registered as unemployed was higher in the early 1990s. Moreover, Ashwin (2006a: 2) argues that although in the first years of the transition more women were laid off, the situation changed quickly and ‘since 1992 women have never been the primary victims of unemployment’. In fact, in 1995 unemployed men outnumbered women by 10,6% (Ashwin and Bowers 1997). Gerber and Mayorova (2006: 2958) also highlight that statistically, the disadvantages that women faced in the early 1990s (such as lay-offs, unemployment and discrimination) diminished by 1995 and none of them increased as the transition proceeded. A similar argument is expressed in relation to other post-state socialist countries, and van der Lippe and Fodor (1998: 146) conclude that ‘while marketisation certainly did not reduce gender inequalit[ies] [in the labour market], so far it also did not increase them as much as expected’. Statistical measures (such as the level of (un)employment, lay-offs or the wage gap) may indeed serve as an indicator of an immediate advantage or disadvantage of women in the labour market. However, as I argue in my thesis, it is also important to look at how the discourses and practices of gender shape patterns of inequality at the level of the individual (see Chapter 5) because rather than producing an immediate effect they may have much deeper and long-term consequences on women’s position in paid employment. In order to better understand the development of these patterns, rather than trying to place women in the category of winners or losers, it is important to consider *how* and *what* factors of the transitional period influenced women’s position in the labour market.

The impact of the recent changes on women’s position in paid employment represents a rather complex picture. To begin with women’s concentration in the tertiary sectors such as light industry or services appears to have actually helped them to adjust to the transitional labour market since these branches started to bloom post 1989 while heavy industries where men were concentrated experienced a considerable decline (Ashwin and Bowers 1997; van der Lippe and Fodor 1998). Jyrkinen-Pakkasvira (1996) found that women who were concentrated in the female-dominated sectors felt more secure during the transition. Women thought that the service sector, education, health, care and such like occupations would always be needed; therefore unemployment was not much of a threat to

them. However, some studies (Sätre Ählander 2001; Gerber and Mayorova 2006) indicate that women were concentrated in those sectors of service that had lower wages and slower growth. Moreover, after the transition there has been a general decrease in salaries in the feminised sectors of the economy (Mezentseva 2004). Thus, although women might have had higher chances of keeping their jobs than men, their average wages were still lower. Furthermore, as Glass (2008: 772) argues, by 2000 being in a service sector job no longer guaranteed security from job loss.

Besides the transformations of different sectors of the economy, and importantly for my thesis, Szalai (2000) points out that after 1989 changes in the economy gave rise to many new occupations which were beneficial for women. Women's 'skills and services that were previously exchanged informally' (ibid.: 200) and were unpaid, turned into legitimate paid occupations during the transition period and this gave women advantage in adaptation. The professionalisation of social work in which women were engaged informally before the transformation period for example led to their upward social mobility (ibid.: 219). Thus, women's possession of certain skills like social networking and management skills comprised a form of social capital that they could utilize for successful labour market engagement under a new type of economy, even though the increase in opportunities did not entail a rapid growth of personal incomes for women (Ghodsee 2005; Szalai 1990). The existing research outlines that women had certain advantages in entering newly born occupations; it does not, however, fully explore the question of the patterns of entry into the new occupations. In Chapters 3 and 4 I revisit the debates on women's access to and choice of higher education and the debates on personal networks in Russia and I will argue that the opportunities to access the new occupations are not the same for different cohorts of women.

Another source of new possibilities for women was the development of the private sector of the economy. By 1996 about 35% of small business owners in Russia were women. They mainly engaged in trading, financial services, health and care services (Izyumov and Razumnova 2000). Gerber and Hout (1998) however argue that women's presence in the new private sector of economy was still considerably smaller than men's. Women find it more difficult to set up private enterprises due to the lack of initial monetary capital and the lack of networks in the private sector. Besides, in the early 1990s many women considered jobs in this sector of the economy unstable, unreliable, more risky and therefore more suitable for men (Jyrkinen-Pakkasvirta 1996). Nevertheless, the fact that more men were engaged in self-employment does not mean that women were not attracted to the private sector. In fact, the number of women entrepreneurs has increased and the overall attitude to women entrepreneurship is reported to be positive (Ylinenpää

and Chechurina 2000). The problem with female self-employment however, is that women are often drawn into the ‘informal’ sector (e.g. home employment, unregistered entrepreneurship). Employment in this sector helped women to sustain their families during the early years of the transition and provided the opportunity to work part-time (see Szalai 1990). Furthermore, home-based enterprises or small private firms do not usually report or pay their taxes, which makes it possible to have higher profits (Shama 1996). However, the obvious drawbacks are the lack of job security and welfare benefits such as health insurance, pensions, legal protection. Szalai (2000) argues that the long-term consequence of women’s concentration in such jobs is that they may become second-class workers. In Chapter 4 I extend this argument and show what the particular consequences of employment in the informal sector are for women’s earnings and their status as professionals. I also analyse specific issues that women in this profession face which add to the difficulty of running a private business (e.g. the challenges of advertising, the role of the professionalism discourses, the (gendered) dilemma of earning in care/cure occupations).

An interesting feature of the post-1989 labour market is the practice of multiple job-holding.¹⁶ Research suggests that after the 1990s many people engaged in numerous income generating strategies besides full-time employment: for instance, people worked part-time, worked in the informal sphere, engaged in occasional employment, etc. (Afontsev 2006; Clarke 1999b; 2002). Foley (1997) points out that it was not unusual under the Soviet regime that people did other work (unofficially) besides their full-time employment. After the 1990s it became possible to do so legally (Afontsev 2006). However, in the transition period the overall number of women doing ‘additional work’ declined. Moreover, those women who held multiple jobs usually earned only about 31.4% of men’s salary in their secondary jobs. Yet, the wage rate in the secondary jobs was considerably higher than in the primary employment: 7.4 times greater for men and 2.8% higher for women (Foley 1997: 19). Women on average do more hours in secondary jobs and the occupations with the highest proportion of multiple job holding are ‘life science and health’ and ‘teaching professions’ where women dominate (ibid.: 14). Of particular interest is the fact that health-related professionals are most likely to have their secondary job in the same field (ibid.: 17). Yaroshenko et al. (2006: 147) argue that the lower activity of women in secondary employment is due to the assumption that ‘supplementing

¹⁶ According to Foley (1997: 4) ‘an individual is considered a multiple job holder if he or she maintains primary employment and engages in additional work for pay’. In his study two types of additional work were considered: ‘working at a second formal job and engaging in individual (self-employed) economic activity’ (ibid.: 4). Some studies (Yaroshenko et al. 2006) consider only informal work (self-employed) as additional employment.

household income through additional work is perceived to be a masculine duty'. Nevertheless, women do engage in secondary employment if they have a good opportunity for it or as an emergency measure, e.g. in a situation of extreme need. Thus, the fact that the highest percentage of multiple job holders come from the female-dominated spheres of public health and life sciences may mean that professional women in these fields either have higher chances of making extra money or have more 'emergencies'. In Chapter 4 I develop the discussion on multiple employments in transitional economies further and argue that the reasons for multiple job holding are more complex than just earning a supplementary income.

Finally, one of the consequences of the change to a market economy which is important in relation to women's position in the labour force is that during the transition in Russia the overall 'occupational structure has shifted towards more feminised occupations and away from male-dominated occupations' (Gerber and Mayorova 2006: 2057). This, as I have already mentioned, gave women more job opportunities. However, interestingly, Mezentseva (2004) points out that in several traditionally female-dominated areas such as banking and insurance there was a tendency for a decline in the number of women (for example in banking from 90% in 1990 to 70% in 2001) and for the exclusion of women from top managerial positions. These professions have experienced the most radical increase of wages among the female-dominated professions and have largely been relocated to the private sector of the economy (ibid.: 317-318). Clark and Sacks (2004: 256) argue that such a re-configuration of the gender structure in the labour market will later cause the re-definition of what constitutes a woman's or a man's job. However, it is not quite clear how exactly these transformations occur/will occur; why they do not take place in all female-dominated occupations, and how professionals themselves envisage, interpret and, what is more important, deal with these changes.

Much literature on the post-Soviet period focuses on the analysis of the structural changes in paid employment (e.g. the emergence of new forms of employment, the development of new occupations etc.) and the consequences of these transformations for women (Ashwin 2006a; Clark and Sacks 2004; Clarke 1999b; Izyumov and Razumnova 2000; Mezentseva 2004; Szalai 2000; van der Lippe and Fodor 1998). However, it is crucial to situate these changes in the cultural and social context of Russian society. In the early 1990s, all these adverse economic and legal conditions were 'flavoured' by Gorbachev's ideological agenda for women to leave the labour market and to return to motherhood and domesticity as their 'purely womanly mission' (Bridger 1992; Kay 2002; McMahon 1994: 63). There was also a rise of discourses on the 'resurrection' of traditional masculinity among Russian men (Attwood 1996: 256; Kay 2000) and femininity among

Russian women (Kerig et al. 1993). The male breadwinner ideology also regained prominence (Khotkina 1994; Kiblitckaya 2000a). Recent research shows that Russians maintain quite conservative attitudes towards gender roles (Kerig et al. 1993; Motiejunaite and Kravchenko 2008: 45; Rimashevskaya 1992). Today there are obvious inconsistencies between the gender rhetoric and reality in Russia. For instance, the dual breadwinner model 'is the most common family arrangement' in Russia (Motiejunaite and Kravchenko 2008: 45), there is a large number of single-headed households and most of them are headed by women (Fong 1993: 6; Motiejunaite and Kravchenko 2008: 46), and women's primary contribution to the household after age 36 is monetary (Afontsev 2006). But as research indicates women themselves still buy into traditional male breadwinner discourses (Ashwin 2006b; Ashwin 2002). This has been primarily explained as a 'backlash' to the construction of the 'superwoman' and the suppression of masculinity by the paternalistic state (see Kay 2002; Kiblitckaya 2000a; Occhipinti 1996; Plessix Gray 1990). In Chapter 5 I continue this discussion of the literature on the gender regimes in Russia and focus on women's perceptions of gendered realities in order to expand the understanding of the reasons for and consequences of the persistence of the existing thinking on gender.

As Ashwin (2006a: 2) illustrates, despite the difficulties that women faced in the post-1990s labour market, the predictions that 'women would voluntarily leave the labour market once they were no longer forced to work' did not come true. Women were not eager to give up their jobs (Ashwin and Bowers 1997; Clarke 1999a) and according to the Russian Federal State Statistics Service¹⁷ in 2007 the participation of men and women in the labour market was 50,4% and 49,5%. One of the reasons is, of course, the financial need to sustain the family and the fact that women were afraid to leave their jobs because it could be impossible for them to find another position (Clark and Sacks 2004; Jyrkinen-Pakkasvira 1996; Kiblitckaya 2000b). However, financial issues aside, work is an essential part of 'Russian women's sense of identity, [it] provides them with a sense of meaning, of being socially useful, and is a source of companionship and support' (Ashwin 2006a: 35). Moreover, a greater percentage of women than men report that they would continue to work even if they had the financial possibility not to, and such attitudes prevail among all age groups (*ibid.*). Given the complexities of the interplay of economic changes and various social factors it is clear that it is difficult (and perhaps unnecessary) to categorize the impact of the transition on women's position in the labour market in a univocal way. However, since women in Russia seem to have no intention of leaving the labour market it

¹⁷ The Russian Federal State Statistics. Available at http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b08_61/IssWWW.exe/Stg/2-15.htm. Accessed 2 November 2009.

is important to continue to investigate women's experiences and ways to improve their position.

The relevant literature I have reviewed tends to focus on the *macroeconomic* level of the analysis of women's employment and mainly considers how the *overall* change in the labour market *generally* affected women's position in the labour market and/or how women generally perceive this change. I would argue that it is at least equally important to focus on the meso- and micro-level (e.g. workplace and individual professions) where the mechanisms of gender inequality are constantly constructed and reproduced by individuals.

The Study of Professions

Although the transformations in Russia obviously concern most professionals within the labour market little is known about how these changes shape the development of individual professions. This is not surprising since as I explain in detail in Chapter 6 the structure and position of the professions in the Soviet Union differed from the professions in the Anglo-American context mainly due to the different relationship between the professions and the state (see Balzer 1996; Brown 1987; Field 1991; Jones 1991; Krause 1991; MacDonald 1995). Now that the Soviet Union no longer exists there is still a gap in the literature which explores the mechanisms of the professionalisation of occupations in contemporary Russia. This thesis partly aims to fill this gap. In Chapter 6 I engage in depth with the literature on professionalisation and professional organisations, and analyse the course of the professionalisation processes of psychology in the transitional economy of Russia.

Apart from the fact that there is little research on the development of professions in the transitional economy of Russia, even less attention is paid to the role of gender in this process. In spite of the fact that many rather new occupations in Russia such as social work, marketing, tourism, or psychological counselling are mainly female-dominated (Szalai 2000; Ghodsee 2005; Izyumov and Razumnova 2000) not much research has been done on the mechanisms of the professionalisation and development of these fields through a gendered lens. The studies that have been done in Russia, for example on the growth of entrepreneurship (e.g. Izyumov and Razumnova 2000; Ylinenpää and Chechurina 2000), social work (e.g. Iarskaia-Smirnova 2001; Iarskaia-Smirnova and Romanov 2002; Templeman 2004) or on psychology and psychotherapy (e.g. Cote 1998; Manichev and Mileshkina 2006; Rotkirch and Temkina 1996; Shelyag 2007; Yurevich 2006) tend to focus mainly on the issues of professional qualifications, training and legislation and either ignore gender issues completely or do not point them out as significant. Furthermore, most of the studies also do not address the experiences and views of individual women (and

men) in these occupations.¹⁸ Some research which focuses on the lived experiences of working women in Russia (Ashwin 2006a; Ashwin and Bowers 1997; Rotkirch and Haavio-Mannila 1996, etc.) mainly examines women's perceptions of the *overall* impact of the transition on their lives or their views on such issues as unemployment and the deterioration of the living conditions. Only a few studies investigate the experiences of women in individual occupations in post-Soviet Russia (Harden 2001; Kauppinen-Tropainen et al. 1996; Rotkirch and Temkina 1996). Thus, one of the aims of this thesis is to analyse the emergence of an individual profession (psychological counselling) in the context of the transitional period, focusing on the particular experiences of professional women and their perceptions of the recent changes (Chapter 6).

The choice of a female-dominated profession of psychological counselling is especially significant in light of the argument that the labour market in Russia underwent an overall shift towards feminisation (Gerber and Mayorova 2006) which as some scholars argue can result in a possible redefinition of what constitutes women's or men's work (Clark and Sacks 2004). Given the complexities of the historical and ideological legacy which are intertwined with the new capitalist developments, the question is how exactly does gender shape the development and professionalisation of female-dominated occupations in the Russian context? How do transitional factors affect the emergence of a profession as feminised? What are counsellors' experiences and perceptions of working in a female-dominated profession? There is quite a long tradition of theorising gender and work, and the feminisation of the labour force and individual professions in the Anglophone literature (e.g. Adams 2005; Barker 1998; Chua and Clegg 1990; Crompton and Sanderson 1990b; Glazer 1991; Jenson et al. 1988; Lorber 1984; Lunt 1999; Reskin and Roos 1990; 1992; Roos 1997; Riska 2001; Sandall 1996; Walby 1986; Wilson 2006; Witz 1992). For the purposes of this thesis, I shall now review the existing frameworks of analysing feminisation and the debates on women's participation in professions to understand how they are relevant to the Russian context and to identify some of the debates this thesis will address.

Theories of Feminisation

Feminisation as an analytical category is conceptualised in several ways which can be summarised as 1) the numerical increase of women in an occupation (see Reskin and Roos 1990; Rich 1995) and 2) the gender-typing of an occupation, i.e. the number of women in

¹⁸ This is partly rooted in the strong quantitative methodological tradition in Russian sociology where qualitative studies have only been introduced after the 1990s and are developing rather slowly (see Chapter 2).

an occupation increases and the field is (re)defined as ‘women’s work’ (see Britton 2000; Holbrook 1991). Depending on the way feminisation is operationalized, the analysis of the reasons for and the consequences of feminisation often take different directions. However the division between these positions is not completely rigid and inflexible.

In the framework of the first perspective, Barbara Reskin and Patricia Roos (1990) have comprehensively described the reasons and outcomes of feminisation in their theory of job queues as gender queues. The main idea is that ‘employers rate workers and workers rank jobs and both [of these procedures] are shaped by gendered processes and practices’ (Riska 2001: 29). Therefore, for instance, when there is a shortage of male workers in a certain field, women’s opportunities to enter this field increase, which can result in feminisation (Reskin and Roos 1990). The authors show how various structural factors (e.g. the growth of an industry, the deficit of male workers, the decline of occupational earnings and autonomy, and the growth of a female clientele to name a few), ‘present women with different choices [of jobs] than men and employers with different outlooks on men and women as workers’ (Rich 1995: 361). Other reasons for feminisation that are named are deprofessionalisation, deskilling, loss of exclusivity etc. (Brown 1987; Davies, M. 1982; Philipson 1993; Strobe and Arnold 1987). The job queues framework is very powerful in explaining feminisation; however, it treats this process as rather homogeneous. As I show in my work (Chapters 3 and 4), feminisation of the professions varies according to class and age dimensions.

The outcomes of feminisation according to Reskin and Roos (1992) are either occupational resegregation: when women replace men and the occupation becomes low status and low paid; or ghettoization: when women concentrate within the low-paid and low-status sectors of an occupation. The authors conclude that women on the whole benefit neither economically nor occupationally from entering feminised fields (ibid.: 86). However, these arguments have been contested and expanded (Bradley 1993; Chiu and Leicht 1999; Coventry 1999; Wright and Jacobs 1994). For example, Wright and Jacobs (1994) in their study of the feminisation of computer work in the USA found neither of the outlined outcomes to be strongly marked. Chiu and Leicht (1999: 558) in their research on women lawyers in the USA propose the possibility of a ‘successful feminisation’ whereby it ‘occur[s] simultaneously with rising wages, decreased segregation, and a reduced gender gap’ and thus increases equality. This study indicates that ‘success’ is determined by the context of the professional development and can happen when there is a growth of employment in the profession, wages are increasing and when a graduate degree is an important entry requirement into an occupation. The question however is: how stable is the success of feminisation and under which conditions will it last? To show the patterns

through which a particular profession maintains its feminised composition I analyse specific cultural, gender and economic factors that contribute to this process and further address literatures on gendered occupational choices and gendered access to education (Chapter 3); gender and professional networking (Chapter 4); and the gendered discourses of/at work in feminised occupations (Chapter 5).

The thesis that the feminisation of an occupation causes the decline of its status has also been challenged. For example, Navarro (1977: 48) using the case of the medical profession in the Soviet Union, has demonstrated that feminisation was not the reason for its low prestige.¹⁹ He argues that the state propaganda valorised ‘productive’ (heavy) industries and manual work, and since medicine was deemed a ‘service’ occupation, it was therefore less ‘valuable’. Consequently, ideological and economic specificities were the reasons for the lower status of the profession rather than its sex composition. Kauppinen et al. (1996) also propose that the low level of wages in medicine and other white-collar jobs in the Soviet Union were due to the wage policy of the state which was the consequence of the ideological value system rather than gender distribution. England et al. (2007) similarly did not find a causal relation between feminisation and the decrease of wages while Adams (2005) maintains that the feminisation occurred after the decrease of the status and wage rate in the profession. It could be argued, however, that the feminised state of the profession potentially sustains and reproduces the gender composition and wage policy; but it is important that feminisation might not have been the first and only reason for the decrease in the occupational status and/or wages. As, Glover (2005: 233) points out for the case of scientific employment in post-socialist countries, the feminisation may be ‘associated’ with the decrease of the status of science, but did not necessary cause this decrease. Therefore, the relationship between the feminisation of an occupation and the decline of its status and prestige is not obvious and should be seen as influenced by and embedded in the given historical and cultural context (for further discussion see Churchward 1968; Heitlinger 1991).²⁰

¹⁹ The issue of the status and prestige of medicine in the state socialist countries, however, is not unproblematic. Churchward (1968: 77-76) for example, provides evidence that medicine *was not* a low prestige profession in the Soviet Union. He argues that the professions are associated with social class. In the Soviet Union medicine was a profession of the *intelligentsia* class and therefore it was ranked as very prestigious or attractive by those who belonged to both the intelligentsia and working class, although ranked low among those of agricultural background or farmers (see also Yanowitch and Dodge 1969). The status can also vary depending on other factors, e.g. whether one talks about the profession as a collective or an individual professional (for further discussion see Brown 1985; Field 1991; Heitlinger 1991).

²⁰ Menkel-Meadow (1989: 306-307) also argues that the measures/concepts that are used to assess the processes of feminisation are based on ‘conventional male-constructed sociology’. For example, status and prestige are calculated on the basis of salary ‘even where there is some evidence [that] women themselves look to other measures’. Thus the meanings that professionals attach to their own work and work ‘choices’ are obscured and therefore can lead to the reinforcement of these categories.

Some researchers (Adams 2005; Denekens 2002; Holbrook 1991; Levinson and Lurie 2004; Muzzin et al. 1994) address another set of questions regarding the effect of the gender composition in professions: whether the shift towards feminisation alters the ways in which a profession is practised and whether the change it yields has positive or negative outcomes. Studies show that the practices of women (e.g. working hours, attending to clients, organisational affiliation) differ from those of men (Adams 2005; Muzzin et al. 1994; Williams, P. 1999). Paul Williams (1999) however, argues that the overall (positive or negative) impact of these differences on professional practices is not evident. He states that feminisation *per se* may not necessarily cause changes because it can occur simultaneously with other transformation processes (e.g. new policies or legislation) that influence the change of professional practices.²¹ Thus, he emphasizes ‘the need to take the broader social, economic and political context into account when attempting to interpret’ the impact of gender on a profession (Williams, P. 1999: 116). I agree with the latter statement and in this thesis I also investigate how the feminised state of the profession affects its development. I show that in order to explain the kind of effect that feminisation produces and why, one needs to look beyond the numbers and practices and investigate the various levels of the profession on which its gendered character is constructed and reproduced.

The second perspective on feminisation suggests that feminisation is not a mere change in sex-composition but also a process by which the profession undergoes a more fundamental shift and gets (re)defined as women’s work (Adams 2005: 89). Britton (2000) argues that conceptualising feminisation just as a numerical change in the number of women is not productive because this perspective does not attend to the question of why and how the definitions of gender-appropriateness of work are shaped. She also posits that the distinction between gender composition and gender-typing (a process through which jobs come to be regarded as requiring masculine or feminine characteristics) is crucial because although the two usually coincide there are cases when female-dominated occupations do not necessarily require stereotypical feminine characteristics (e.g. female prisoner guards) (ibid.: 424-425) or when the increasing amount of women does not lead to the redefinition of the whole profession as ‘women’s work’ (e.g. computer work). Thus, conceptualising feminisation as gender-typing examines ‘qualitative’ feminisation, or how the professions come to ‘require’ particular gender characteristics from their workers and what these changes entail (ibid.: 424).

²¹ It may however be argued that the feminisation of an occupation in the first place triggers a change of policies or professional norms.

Britton (2000: 427) highlights that ‘occupations are symbolically and discursively gendered’ *by culture* and *by individuals* (the workers) themselves. The cultural gendering is a more rigid kind of gender-typing than the individual one. Cultural feminisation is a process through which certain skills historically become associated with men. For instance, ‘developing a body of abstract and special knowledge has been more characteristic of the masculine professions, while serving others through applying and communicating knowledge has been more characteristic of the feminine professions’ (Holbrook 1991: 203). The ‘gendering process at the individual and interactional levels is often more flexible and even contradictory than the cultural construction of an occupation’ (Britton 2000: 429). Leidner (1991: 174) argues that the characteristics of the job itself do not determine whether it will be seen more (or less) suitable for women or men, but ‘job features are resources for interpretation’ by workers. For instance, in her study of insurance sellers Leidner underscores that although the ‘cultural’ image of the insurance assistant requires communicational skills which are culturally defined as ‘feminine’, men working in this profession interpret it in strictly masculine terms and characteristics such as competitiveness, survival etc. Thus, an investigation of feminisation on this level offers the possibility to highlight the ways in which individuals see the ‘gender(edness)’ in/of their occupation and how they negotiate it. In Chapter 5 I engage further with the debates on women’s and men’s position in female-dominated occupations to discuss both the similarities with the ‘west’ and the specificities of the Russian context. I analyse various inconsistencies that emerge within individual discourses on the role of gender in the profession of psychological counselling to further extend the understanding of the gender-typing of occupations in the Russian context.

Since in the context of this framework on feminisation the ways in which an occupation becomes feminised are seen through the processes of attributing gender-specific characteristics to it, the consequences of feminisation discussed in this framework are also related to the cultural constructions of gender. England (2005: 383) argues that ‘cultural ideas deprecate women and thus, by cognitive association, devalue work typically done by women’. Therefore, ‘female-dominated jobs, [especially] involving care, are especially devalued because care is the quintessentially female identified activity’ (ibid.). This results in the fact that female-dominated jobs and especially jobs involving care are generally less well paid (Kilbourne et al. 1994). On the other hand, more optimistically, Menkel-Meadow (1989) suggests that feminisation can also lead to at least a partial redefinition of the professional work culture, the meanings of productivity of work and status within professions and professional practices which potentially lead to an increase in gender equality.

The range of potential changes that the feminisation of occupations entail also depends on the way in which researchers conceptualize gender *per se*. Le Feuvre (1999: 156-157), for instance, presents an elaborate classification of feminisation frameworks according to their views on gender and consequently according to the potential of altering underlying gender relationships through the processes of feminisation. The four approaches she identifies are 1) ‘feminisation as reproduction of gender’ which means gender inequality persists regardless; 2) ‘feminisation as feminitude’ which suggests that the influx of women can change the organisational and professional practices; 3) ‘feminisation as virilitude’ means that women adopt masculine characteristics; thus there is little change in occupational values although some transformation is possible; 4) ‘feminisation as a transformation’ approach adopts the view that gendering processes can lead to a substantial change in the underlying male/female binary. This last understanding of feminisation is based on the social constructivist conception of gender and work and is a position which has the highest ‘expectations as to the degree of change to be expected as a consequence of occupational feminisation’ (ibid.: 158). As Le Feuvre maintains, researching the experiences of women who work in ‘elite’ professions (and elsewhere) ‘provides insights into the ways in which women can, and indeed, in some circumstances, are contesting and deconstructing the very material, symbolic, interactive, and identity foundations of the mid-twentieth-century gender (differentiation) process’ (1999: 159-160). To show the ways in which female psychologists construct and negotiate gender and professional ideas is indeed one of the goals of this project. However, I also show that the feminised state of the profession may not be seen as transformative by professionals, and I identify certain factors the presence or lack of which reduce the transformative potential of feminisation (Chapters 5 and 6).

In this thesis I shall analyse my case study of psychological counselling from both numerical and gender-typing perspectives since such a multi-dimensional approach provides a better understanding of the implications and meanings of the feminisation of the profession. This will allow me to show the complex relationship between the structures and the processes of feminisation. I shall also analyse the process of feminisation, its reasons and consequences as being embedded in the cultural, economic and historical context of Russia in order to unpack the specificities of the patterns of the feminisation and professionalisation in Russia. My study of the Russian psychologists also represents an interesting case as the profession in technical terms *is feminised* but it did not undergo a process of actual change in gender distribution. This means that investigating this profession will show what factors allowed it *to emerge* as a feminised field in the transitional period and how the feminised nature of this profession is sustained.

Psychology in Russia and the Feminisation of Psychology

There is a growing body of literature on the branches of mental health specialities (psychiatry, psychotherapy and psychology) in Russia in the Anglophone literature and recently attention to this field has been on the rise in Russian-language publications. However, there are several gaps in this research. Most of the studies of psychiatry use a historical angle and discuss the use of psychiatry as a tool of oppression under the Soviet regime (e.g. Bloch and Raddaway 1977; Cohen 1989; 1984; Windholz 1999). Some studies try to redeem the oppressive nature of the Soviet mental health system (e.g. Spencer 2000). Others document the development of psychiatry in the post-1989 period, focusing on the ways in which it changed in terms of laws, infrastructure and services (Gurovich 2007; Poloshij and Shaposhnikova 2001). There is little analysis of the relation between the legacy of Soviet psychiatry and the development of counselling psychology in contemporary Russia, although some studies touch upon the possible influence of the nature of the psychiatric services in the Soviet Union upon the public's attitudes to counselling and psychotherapy in contemporary Russia (Gilbert and Shiryaev 1992).

The number of publications on psychology and psychotherapy in Russia has also increased recently. Researchers provide quite comprehensive historical accounts of the development of these fields during the Soviet Period and after (Balachova et al. 2001; 2004; Brožek 1966; Cote 1998; Etkind 1997; Gilbert and Shiryaev 1992; Grigorenko et al. 1997; Havenaar et al. 1998; McLeish 1975; Karandashev 1998; 2006; Kozulin 1984; Sukhodolsky et al. 1995; Vasilieva 2000; Vasilyeva 2006, etc.). Some studies illustrate the impact of the Soviet regime on the development of the branches of psychological science and the implications of the Soviet ideology for the development of psychological theory, methodology and therapeutic approaches (e.g. Etkind 1997; Connolly 2006; Kozulin 1992; 1984; Umrikhin 1997; Vasilyeva 2006). Other research documents the changes in the educational system of psychology, outlines the issues with legal regulation of the profession and/or focuses on the theoretical development of various applied approaches to psychology in contemporary Russia (e.g. Jorriak and Paré 2007; Karandashev 1998; 2006; Balachova et al. 2004; Sukhodolsky et al. 1995; Vasilieva 2000). However, most of studies are very descriptive and investigate the development of psychology as a field and/or as a science rather than as work or as a profession. In the subsequent chapters I discuss the debates on legal regulations of psychology and psychotherapy (Chapter 6) and show the ways in which the social and economic environment shapes the Russian counsellors' views on professionalisation. I also consider the factors that impact on the working practices of psychologists and on the development of the professional infrastructure through further

engaging with the debates on earning in care/cure professions (Chapter 4), gender regimes in Russia (Chapter 5), and the development of professional associations (Chapter 6).

Some research is concerned with the present problems of psychological counselling in Russia. Much of this work problematises the under-development of professional legislation, the overly-theoretical nature of professional knowledge and emphasizes the need to adapt the profession to the needs of the market and to the changes in Russian society (e.g. Ivannikov 2006; Manichev and Mileshkina 2006; Mileshkina 2007; Yurevich 2006). However, although these problematic aspects are highlighted they are under-researched. Many articles published in Russian-language professional journals are often based on personal opinions or experiences which are rarely backed up by substantial research (e.g. Martynova 2007; Varga 1999). One of the few studies that exist (Shelyag 2007) involved several surveys of counsellors and revealed certain problems that counselling psychologists face such as the lack of professional information, the lack of supervision and the need for developing practical skills. The study also illustrated that more than half of the respondents thought that their work was highly valued by clients and had high prestige in society and among their colleagues in the mental health fields. However, the participants in the study were mostly specialists who work within the state-funded mental health system. None of them seemed to have a private practice or at least this was not emphasised in the study. Moreover, although the study described some important tendencies, this research was questionnaire-based and therefore focused only on specific narrow questions and missed out on more extensive accounts of the practitioners' experiences of working in this profession. Thus, in my project I set out to analyse the working experiences and working practices of psychological counsellors, the day-to-day challenges they face and the opinions they hold on the state of professional matters. Importantly, my investigation is based on qualitative data (see Chapter 2), rather than on survey data.

Research shows that the rise of psychology and its professionalisation is not unique to Russia and can be seen in other national contexts at different times (see Frank et al. 1995, Furedi 2004; Hutschemaekers and Oosterhuis 2004). Recently many western scholars have concentrated on the investigation of gender in this profession and its increasing feminisation. The growing numbers of women in both in scientific psychology and psychological counselling are currently a cross-cultural and cross-national tendency (Denmark 1998; Norcross et al. 2005; Olos and Hoff 2006; Osterag and McNamara 1991; Stevens and Wedding 2004). International data also indicate that although there is an influx of women into psychology there is still vertical and horizontal segregation in psychology cross-nationally: women are under-represented in higher administrative and executive

positions and men still dominate the more prestigious sectors of the profession (Demnark 1998; Gurevich 2001; Osterag and McNamara 1991; Stevens and Wedding 2004). Women tend to dominate 'practical' psychology rather than the scientific and research side of it (Norcross et al. 2005; Sexton and Hogan 1992; Skinner and Louw 2009). In Chapters 4 and 5 I come back to this discussion to explain how and why these (and other gendered) divisions persist in the Russian context and how it is similar to or different from the western context.

The main concerns regarding the feminisation of psychological counselling have been why it happens and what the implications are for the profession and for the position of women in this field are (Goodheart and Markham 1992; Osterag and McNamara 1991; Skinner and Louw 2009). The reasons for the feminisation provided in the literature include the devaluation-of-care-services hypothesis, the deskilling and declassing of psychotherapeutic services, the increase in funding and availability of higher education for women, and the workings of the feminist movement (Goodheart and Markham 1992; Phillipson 1993). Through investigating the cultural and historic context of Russia my work provides new insights into the causes and mechanisms of the feminisation of psychology as well as the perceived effects of this profession. The main 'worry' about the influx of women into psychology and therapy in the western contexts is that it will lead to a reduction of the status and income of this profession (Goodheart and Markham 1992; Osterag and McNamara 1991). In her study on psychotherapy in the United States Philipson (1993) argues that its feminisation in the American context indicates a decrease in the prestige of the mental health professions and means that women have to bear the burden of care and emotional work which is continually devalued. Other research is less pessimistic and points out the potential for positive outcomes of feminisation (Osterag and McNamara 1991). Scholars also show that in spite of the 'fear of feminisation' there is no direct causal relationship between the entry of women into this profession and the loss of its prestige, and that feminisation can be a product of a combination of factors such as change in policy, market and education (Gurevich 2001; Pion et al. 1996).

The development and the feminised nature of psychology in Russian society seem to be different from its western counterparts in the sense that psychotherapy and psychological counselling started to develop only in the late 1980s. They emerged as feminised professions but as I have already pointed out, they also gained in popularity and prestige. Moreover, in the past 20 years the gender ratio has not significantly shifted. So the question is: what factors caused psychology to develop as a feminised field in Russia and what factors allow for this profession to stay feminised in Russia? Furthermore, does the relationship between the number of women in this profession in Russia and its status

and earnings abide by the same principles as in the western context, or can the differences in cultural context result in different mechanisms and consequences of the feminisation of psychology in Russia?

As I have noted, there have been no systematic studies of the mental health professions through a gendered lens in Russia. All the research done on Russian psychology (or psychiatry or psychotherapy for that matter) is gender blind in spite of the fact that the profession is female-dominated. Thus, drawing on the theoretical frameworks identified in the above section, my aim is to bring women's experiences into the picture and scrutinise the ways in which gender shapes the working lives of Russian counsellors and the development of the profession in general. I agree with Khotkina (1994: 85) who argues that 'it would not be correct to see women [in Russia] merely as passive, long-suffering victims of the transitional period'. Therefore, together with acknowledging and exploring certain structural factors that shape the development of the profession, I shall investigate the personal views of female and male counsellors in order to understand the ways in which they perceive and deal with changes and challenges in their work and how they negotiate their position and status within this profession. As I show further in this thesis, the investigation of the impact of gender on the Russian psychological profession reveals many similarities and allows one to draw certain parallels with other western contexts. I shall also examine how the historical and contextual specificities can yield different patterns and outcomes of the feminisation of a particular profession. Moreover, even though the outcomes may be similar to those in western countries, the mechanisms and the routes that lead to these results are at times different. Thus, situating the profession within the specific cultural, ideological, historical and economic context of contemporary Russia will expand the knowledge of the phenomenon of the feminisation of occupations in the situation of a change from a state-controlled to a market-driven economy. My research also contributes to the understanding of what the feminisation of this profession tells us about the role of gender in Russian society.

To conclude, in this literature review I have identified several gaps in the research on the feminisation and professionalisation of occupations, and psychology in particular, which this thesis aims to fill and showed the debates which this thesis seeks to expand on. I continue to discuss the related literatures and debates in the subsequent chapters.

Thesis Structure

This thesis consists of an Introduction, six chapters and a Conclusion. Chapter 1 outlines the historical background against which the profession of psychological counselling started to develop in Russia. I present an overview of the development of psychiatry, psychotherapy and psychology in the Soviet Union and their present state. In so doing, I seek to analyse the influence of the history of the branches of the mental health profession on the development of psychological counselling in contemporary Russia. I also consider the position of women in the mental health professions in Russia and chart the current state of psychology in Russia, namely, problems with title definition and jurisdiction, the process of psychological education and training, and the rise of the popularity of psychology in society and in popular culture.

After setting the scene I proceed to defining my methodological choices in Chapter 2. I explain my decision regarding the methods, sample, and the logistics of the sampling procedure. I then describe the process of my fieldwork in Russia and consider the advantages and problematic areas of doing interviews in Russia. In the tradition of feminist theorising of reflexivity, I analyse my position as an insider/outsider during the process of my research and the benefits and issues that this produced. Finally, I outline the process of transcribing, translating and my data analysis.

Chapter 3 is the first of four data-analysis chapters and focuses on the role of the education of psychologists in their professional lives. Drawing on the educational experiences of my interviewees I discuss why people choose to pursue psychological education and situate those choices in the economic, political and cultural contexts of Russia. I consider why psychology is a particularly popular profession to train and to re-train in, especially among women, and analyse the role of class, age and educational structures in shaping professional opportunities. I then examine the function of continuing professional development (CPD) training in order to understand why on top of university education psychologists engage in a vast amount of extra education. Finally I consider how the means of and reasons for pursuing education tie in with the construction of the notion of professionalism among Russian psychologists.

In Chapter 4 I proceed to the analysis of the professional routes and working practices of the Russian counsellors and how their professional paths are gendered. I discuss the issues related to the process of entry into the professional labour market. I analyse the advantages and shortcomings of working in the private, state and informal sectors of the economy in Russia respectively and explain the reasons for the multiple job holding among counsellors. This chapter also investigates how the counsellors deal with a

variety of professional challenges such as the under-development of the professional infrastructure, the issue of advertising psychological services and charging fees, and how these professional specificities impact on the development of psychological services.

Having analysed the (gendered) realities of the education and work of professional psychologists, in Chapter 5 I turn to exploring specialists' own views and perceptions of the role of gender in their profession. I investigate how femininity and masculinity are viewed in this profession by the specialists and clients and identify various inconsistencies in the ways in which women think about men as specialists in this profession and about male psychologists and men generally. I show how people's perceptions of gender intersect with and influence professional practices and the ways in which the gender inequalities in the profession are sustained. The final concern of this chapter is to situate the counsellors' attitudes towards gender issues in the broader context of the gender discourses in Russian society in order to explain certain contradictions in the interviewees' opinions.

Finally, Chapter 6 investigates the wider structural and cultural context of the process of the professionalisation of psychological counselling in Russia. I discuss the current state of the process of professionalisation of psychology and analyse how the under-development of professional structures impacts on the profession. I then examine the influence of the Soviet past and the current context on the professional development and the persistence of such issues as the lack of licensing and the weakness of professional organizations. I then focus on the position of women in the development of the professional project of counselling in Russia, and consider the role of structure and agency in the future of this profession and in determining women's place in it.

The Conclusion of this thesis provides a brief summary of the main findings and brings together the arguments from the previous chapters. I then situate my results in the wider context of contemporary Russia in order to understand the further meaning and implications of the feminisation of psychology and what this says about Russian society and the potential for change in women's position in this profession.

Chapter 1: The Historical Development of the Mental Health Professions in the Soviet Union and the Present State of Psychological Counselling

In order to understand what shapes the character of the psychology profession in Russia, it is important to situate its development in a wider historical context. Therefore, in this chapter I shall discuss the historical development of the mental health professions in the Soviet Union. By doing so I seek to explore the ways in which the legacy of the past shapes the present state of professional psychology in Russia. First, I provide an account of the historical development of psychiatry, psychology and psychotherapy in Russia. I mostly focus on the history of these professions during the Soviet era (1917-1989) since the legacy of this particular period has had very significant influence on how the profession of counselling psychology operates in contemporary Russia. I explore the ways in which mental health specialities were imbricated in communist ideology and what implications this had for their development. I then consider the position of women in medicine in Russia followed by a discussion of the current state of psychology in contemporary Russia and the process of education in psychology. But before I proceed to discuss the history of the field, I shall discuss certain problems concerning the definitions of the branches of mental health fields and specify the terms that will be used in this thesis.

Definitions

The concepts of psychiatry, psychology, psychotherapy, and counselling are problematic in that the jurisdictions of these spheres overlap and certain aspects of professional training and certain competency requirements for these professions are similar. Hence, the boundaries of the definitions are not always clear-cut. *The Great Dictionary of Psychology* (Mescheryakov and Zinchenko 2003) provides the following definitions:

Psychiatry is a medical discipline that focuses on the study of the causes and essence of mental disorders, their manifestations, flow, and the methods of treatment and organization of help for patients (382).

Psychology is the science of the principles of development and functioning of the psyche (396).

Clinical psychology is a term used in western psychology (close to the meaning of the Russian term ‘medical psychology’²²) to signify a wide field of applied psychology that includes 1) the diagnosing of divergences in intellectual and personal development, 2) the correction of maladaptive and deviant forms of behaviour of children, adolescents and adults, 3) the prevention of mental illness, 4) and psychotherapy and social rehabilitation of the patients (202).

Psychotherapy – in the narrow sense – is the treatment of a person (patient) with the use of psychological methods of influence. Psychotherapy also includes providing psychological help to mentally healthy people (clients) in situations of psychological difficulties of various kinds, and also in the case of the need to enhance the quality of life (407).

The above definitions cited from a Russian psychological dictionary are not particularly different from those in an equivalent English dictionary (e.g. *Campbell’s Psychiatric Dictionary* (Campbell 2004)). The differences start to arise when it comes to describing the range of responsibilities and the types of training for professionals working in these fields (which I discuss in detail below). Two sets of concepts are particularly problematic: psychotherapy vs counselling and psychotherapist vs counsellor.

There are at least two reasons why defining these concepts is problematic: factual and legal. First, there is still an on-going debate on whether and how the nature and the content of psychotherapy are different from that of counselling. These issues are discussed in many publications both in Russia and in the west (see Feltham 1999; Karvasarsky 2008; Palmer 2000). Usually psychotherapy is described as a longer-term process than counselling, targeting deeper psychological issues and borderline conditions. In the same vein, some of my interviewees stressed that they work with complex problems and do psychotherapy rather than counselling:

Well you know counselling never interested me specifically and I think, that it can’t be any serious work... I work with people, who are really ready and motivated to work, and it is not counselling... This is psychotherapy and that is what I do... I work only with complicated and hard cases and only in psychotherapy. (VF5)

²² Nowadays the term ‘medical psychology’ is rarely used and the term ‘clinical psychology’ has found its way into the professional and legal vocabulary.

However, despite these perceived differences, one can find the same kinds of descriptions for psychological counselling as for psychotherapy in various sources (Palmer 2000). I share the point of view that according to the content of activity no clear-cut distinction can be drawn between counselling and psychotherapy *as a process or activity*. However, another side to this debate is the issue with the legal definitions of the titles in the mental health sphere.

Strictly speaking, there is a distinction between counsellors and psychotherapists *as specialists* in Russian legislation. According to the decree on the Professional Training of Medical Psychologists for the Institutions Which Provide Psychiatric Help²³ (1996) and the decree on Psychiatric and Psychotherapeutic Help²⁴ (1995), psychotherapy as a method of treatment can only be performed by psychotherapists, i.e. those specialists who have a *medical degree*²⁵ (Aleshina 1999; Balachova 2004; Reshetnikov 2003; Karvasarsky 2008). Although psychologists may use the same therapeutic approaches and methods as psychotherapists (which they do), the ‘action’ they perform can only be called *counselling*.²⁶ In some (Russian) professional literature and legislation the services that psychologists provide are called ‘psychological help’ (Martynova 2007) or ‘psychological correction’ (Balachova et al. 2001).

In the same vein, specialists who have a psychology degree (a non-medical degree) and who provide psychological help, can be called *psychologists* or *counsellors*, but not psychotherapists (Gilbert and Shiryaev 1992). The problems with the definitions of the title and activity of psychologists and psychotherapists are not unique to Russia and are documented in the western literature as well (see Hall and Hurley 2003; Lewis and Bor 1998). This debate in its essence is an on-going battle over professional territory, jurisdiction and status (Etkind 1997; Gilbert and Shiryaev 1992). As I show later in this chapter (and in Chapter 6) there are certain specificities that exacerbate this situation in Russia, for instance the history of the development of these professions, the under-development of the professional legislation, and the weakness of the professional organizations.

²³ Ministry of Public Health of the Russian Federation Decree №391 On the Professional Training of Medical Psychologists for the Institutions which Provide Psychiatric and Psychotherapeutic Help, 26.11.96. Available at < http://www.vcom.ru/cgi-bin/db/zakdoc?_reg_number=%C29605155>. Accessed 27 October 2007.

²⁴ Ministry of Public Health and Medical Industry Decree № 294 On Psychiatric and Psychotherapeutic Help, 30.10.1995. Available at < <http://www.humanities.edu.ru/db/msg/60510>>. Accessed 20 October 2007.

²⁵ I discuss the degrees in more detail later in this chapter.

²⁶ There is still however no legal document that specifies that it *should* be called this way or which makes (psychological) counselling a special jurisdiction of psychologists (the aforementioned decrees just imply that their activity cannot be called psychotherapy). There is also no definition of psychological counselling in the Russian *Great Dictionary of Psychology* (Meshcheryakov and Zinchenko 2003). In Chapter 4 I focus on the legal regulation of psychology in Russia in more detail.

For now, I want to underscore that in this thesis I use the official definitions of the terms and titles. All of my interviewees (except two people in Vladivostok who had a medical education) held degrees in psychology and therefore I use the terms *psychologists* or (psychological) *counsellors* to refer to my participants (this is also how most of my interviewees called themselves and their colleagues). I use the terms (psychological) *counselling* or *therapy* to refer to the kinds of services they provide.

Psychiatry in the Soviet Union

The history of psychiatric care in Russia in very broad terms dates back to as early as the Kiev Rus (9th and 10th centuries AD) when those who were considered mentally ill were looked after by the Church. The first book on the diagnosis of mental disorders was published in 1847 (Krasnov and Gurovich 2007: 109). Since then the history of psychiatry has been full of complex, controversial and ambivalent events and processes. This history, I would argue, leads to fearful attitudes towards psychiatry in Russia, which in turn trigger apprehension towards other types of mental health services and mental health specialists.

Russian psychiatry at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century was influenced by the works of several major figures such as Victor Kandinsky (1849-1889) who developed a classification of psychoses, Vladimir M. Bekhterev (1857-1927) who established the neurophysiological foundations of psychiatry, and Sergey S. Korsakov (1854-1900) the founder of the classification approach to mental disorders (Krasnov and Gurovich 2007: 110). The theoretical foundations of psychiatry were also influenced by other prominent theoreticians in the field such as Ivan P. Pavlov (1849-1936) who proposed the theory of higher nervous activity and introduced the concept of the conditioned reflex (Brožek and Slobin 1972). The main approach to understanding mental disorders in the early 20th century was biomedical because psychiatry was a branch of medicine and medicine's general approach to understanding disorders was biological. Further, the development of psychiatry also had physiological foundations due to the lack of competing theories of mental processes: in the Soviet period psychiatry (and psychology) rested only upon neurophysiological and behavioural foundations, for ideological reasons²⁷ (Polubinskaya 2000; Sukhodolsky et al. 1995; Windholz 1999). The Soviet period also produced a difficult and contradictory stage in the history of Russian psychiatry in terms of its practical application.

²⁷ I discuss the relationship between psychological theory and ideology in detail in the following section of this chapter.

Many scholars have demonstrated that from the 1940s psychiatry was used by the Soviet state to silence and punish those who objected to and criticised the regime: the dissidents who mainly belonged to the class of *intelligentsia* (Adler and Gluzman 1993; Birley 2004; Bonnie 2002; Bloch and Reddaway 1984; Faraone 1982; Koryagin 1989; Lader 1977; Windholz 1999). The strategy was easy: as soon as a person was pronounced mentally ill s/he could be forced into a psychiatric hospital or a special psychiatric hospital²⁸ as representing ‘especial danger to society’ (Bloch and Reddaway 1984: 23). To make a diagnosis was ‘unproblematic’ because of the ‘revised’/broadened diagnostic criteria which allowed much leeway for interpretation. For instance, the most ‘popular’ diagnoses were psychosis and ‘creeping schizophrenia’²⁹, the criteria for which were so vague that almost any person could be diagnosed with it (see Merskey and Shafran 1986; Lavretsky 1998; Wilkinson 1986). For example, the diagnosis of Leonid Plyushch, a mathematician who was held in mental hospital for several years for political reasons, was the following:

The case evidence, the hand-written manuscripts, and the results of the examination all testify to the fact that L.I. Plyushch is suffering from a psychiatric illness – sluggish schizophrenia. From his youth he has suffered from paranoid disturbance, characterised by reformist ideas, emotional disturbances and a neurotic attitude to his condition. He is a danger to society: he must be considered not answerable for his actions, and should be sent to a special psychiatric hospital for compulsory treatment. (Khodorovich 1976: 85)

Such a vague diagnosis could be applicable to practically anyone. Plyushch’s wife and friends claimed that he was an absolutely healthy person before he was sectioned. His health was severely damaged during the time he spent in the hospital by the medications he was given. Lader (1977) points out that in order to section someone a psychiatrist should need to provide strong evidential support proving that it was the mental condition of a person that caused the criminal behaviour. This, however, was not the case under the Soviet regime: psychiatrists made ‘predictions’ as to whether a person might commit a further offence (usually political) or might be ‘dangerous to others’ and as Spencer (2000)

²⁸ Regular psychiatric hospitals were under the supervision of the Ministry of Health. Special psychiatric hospitals were under the authority of the Ministry of Internal Affairs which had connections with the KGB. Usually those accused of severe crimes (like murder, assault etc.) and suffering from mental disorders were put in such hospitals on the decision of a court. The regime there was usually as in a prison since all the patients were convicts. The systematic beating of patients and misuse of medical treatment was widely practiced in such institutions (Cohen 1989: 102-104).

²⁹ Also called ‘sluggish schizophrenia’ in other sources (e.g. Faraone 1982; Windholz 1999).

claims, in Soviet Russia many cases were ‘over-predicted’. Any diagnosis issued by the experts from the famous Moscow Serbsky Institute of General and Forensic Psychiatry was beyond debate and was enough to put one in a mental hospital. Once in a mental hospital the confinement was for an indefinite period of time. The patient was not able to appeal or to defend himself (Bloch and Reddaway 1977; 1984). Vladimir Bukovsky who spent several years in a Special Psychiatric Hospital writes that there was no way to prove one’s sanity to the committee of psychiatrists because all the data (behaviour and words of the person, books s/he read, friends s/he had etc.) were interpreted as a symptom of the illness (1987: 155-158). Discharge was also almost impossible because most of the doctors almost never saw their patients and relied only on nurses’ observations (ibid.: 161). Moreover, doctors did not want to take the responsibility for discharging a patient as such actions could be interpreted as doubting the diagnosis (and the authority) of the Serbsky Institute. Such abusive use of psychiatric institutions by the state to regulate its citizens’ behaviour has at least partially been proven by scholars and eyewitnesses.

However, some scholars argue that the story of the abuse of psychiatry is in fact more complicated (Bonnie 2002; Spencer 2000). Spencer (2000), for example, claims that the misuse of psychiatry occurred only in the 1970-1980s. He argues that many dissidents were saved from labour camps and death because they were put into hospitals and the dreadful and dangerous treatment inside the institutions was largely due to a lack of new methods of cure and the defective state of the existing ones. As for over-diagnosing it was induced by the Party and served certain political purposes. Hence, the author argues that psychiatry was not inherently repressive and individual psychiatrists were often not to blame for what they did as they were trying to protect their own lives and probably the life of a patient. However, when analysing psychiatric abuse in the Soviet Union and for the purposes of this thesis, rather than trying to redeem individual medics, it is more important to understand how such an oppressive use of psychiatry affects the perception of mental health services in Russia today.

I would argue that even though the psychiatric abuse of the Soviet regime is long gone, psychiatry and its services in Russia are still surrounded by an aura of fear, danger and suspicion. There are good reasons for this. In the late 1970s when the monographs, biographies and interviews of *émigré* dissidents (e.g. Vladimir Bukovsky, Semyon Gluzman and Leonid Plyushch) were released, they provided people with the proof that the punitive use of psychiatry in the Soviet Union events was not a fabricated story. After the growing concern of the world’s psychiatric community with psychiatric abuse in Soviet Russia (see Bloch and Raddaway 1984; 1989; Bonnie 2002; Young-Anawaty 1978) and after the Soviet Union’s collapse in 1991, Russia reconsidered and changed the internal

laws on psychiatry to comply with international standards of human rights and freedom. In 1992 Russia passed a Law on Psychiatric Care and Guarantees of Citizens' Rights and in 1994 Russian psychiatrists adopted a Code of Professional Ethics (Gordon and Meux 2000; Polubinskaya 2000). Now psychiatric examination (and sectioning) without a patient's consent may only be done if a person represents an obvious danger to himself or herself and others, or only according to the decision of a court. In contrast to the Soviet system, the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation³⁰ now states that a reappraisal of the status of a patient in a mental hospital must take place every six months. The judge's decision whether to stop or to continue compulsory treatment is based on the evidence of an examination made by a group of medical experts (psychiatrists). Paragraph 102 of the Criminal Code now states that the appeal for re-examination can be made either by a doctor, or by the relatives of the patient, or *by the patient* himself (which was not possible in the Soviet Union). Thus, the laws have changed. However, the authority of a psychiatrist to prescribe mandatory treatment in a hospital, although reduced, is still there and this can trigger the apprehension of the abuse of these services.

The anxiety that surrounds psychiatric services is also rooted in the kinds of treatment offered. Even the descriptions of the methods used in psychiatric practice in the Soviet Union, such as insulin coma therapy, inducement of high fever, 'wet wraps' (which means wet linen wrapped around the body which when dried made it difficult to breathe) is enough to incite fear in anyone (Bloch and Raddaway 1984). Of course, today these methods are not used anymore. However, from my experience of working in a mental institution and from personal communication, it is a common belief among psychologists that psychiatrists use medical treatment solely and excessively which may not be suitable for minor psychological disorders. Moreover, due to limited funding, the medications that are used in hospitals are usually of low quality (Gurovich 2007) and may cause many side effects.

The state of the infrastructure for mental health care is yet another source of negative attitudes. Psychiatry in the Soviet Union was organised as a system of hospitals and dispensaries. Hospitals were usually in-patient but there were also special outpatient institutions for mental problems – dispensaries. Psycho-neurological dispensaries (PND) were initially organised to provide more affordable psychiatric help for people and were based on the district principle (Krasnov and Gurovich 2007). They were meant to register patients, issue primary diagnoses, and assure prevention and prophylactics. PNDs provided medical assistance at home, carried out expert assessment, dealt with decisions of

³⁰ The Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (1996). Available at < <http://www.russian-criminal-code.com/> >. Accessed 2 December 2009.

guardianship when necessary, etc. (Hyde 1974). There also used to be a scheme of rehabilitation for former patients, and special places for them to work while recovering (Poloshij and Shaposhnikova 2001). However, the way the system worked in theory was quite different from how it worked in everyday life.

In his research on psychiatric care in the Soviet Union Cohen (1989) shows that many people viewed dispensaries negatively. The main concern was related to the system of registration and lack of confidentiality. Even if there was nothing severely wrong with a person's mental health a call from a psychiatric dispensary to the place of work could get him/her fired and could result in a difficulty in getting a job afterwards. It was also socially problematic because neighbours and colleagues would treat a person with mental health problems suspiciously. One also had to pay scheduled visits to the dispensary for a long time after recovery. Nowadays, there have been various efforts to make these services more patient-friendly (Gurovich 2007). Present-day psychiatry is still based on the system of hospitals and dispensaries and psychiatric care is still free for people (Gurovich 2007; Poloshij and Shaposhnikova 2001). The difference is that now it is confidential and the mandatory register for patients when they contact dispensaries does not operate anymore (Krasnov and Gurovich 2007). However, although the legislation has changed, 'the fear of social stigma [induced] by the previous registration system in dispensaries led to a significant reduction in the number of patients who applied for care' (ibid.: 117). Moreover, the conditions of in-patient psychiatric care facilities have gradually gone downhill.

Since the 1990s due to the deterioration of the general economic conditions and lack of finance, the number of beds in hospitals has gradually been reduced, but the number of patients has grown in the period of the transition (Gurovich 2007; Krasnov and Gurovich 2007; Polubinskaya 2000). Many hospitals are overcrowded, the conditions are worsening and there is a lack of staff. There has been a trend towards a multi-agency approach and an attempt to involve psychologists and social workers in psychiatric care. Nonetheless, because of the bad conditions and low salaries people are not attracted to working in state hospitals (Krasnov and Gurovich 2007). In the mental hospital where I had my internship (in 2004-2005) the number of beds in a 'standard' room was not less than 10-15 (some of which were two-tier beds) with tiny aisles in between. The patients had a collective bath in a 'sauna' arranged in the basement about once a week, meaning that the smell of food, dirty bodies and other unpleasant substances in the corridors was hard to stand. There was no common room with a television and games available to patients, such as feature in American films. The main entertainment for patients was wandering around the corridors and counting cars outside the barred window. The hospital

was overcrowded so doctors were unable to perform psychotherapy sessions, and they rarely saw each patient every week. Medication was scarce due to the lack of funding so that those patients whose relatives could afford to buy better quality medicine had a slightly better chance of recovery. The attitude of nurses and other junior medical personnel also left much to be desired. Although some really tried to make the lives of the patients a bit easier (notwithstanding their low salary and terrible working conditions), nevertheless more 'common' attitudes were disdain, irritation and indifference. This hospital, however, was not amongst the worst in terms of conditions and medical personnel. The Law on Psychiatric Help and the Guarantee of Rights of the Citizens during Its Provision³¹ (1992) allowed the establishment of private mental hospitals, which however must be licensed through a special procedure. Usually the conditions in such hospitals are better but they are not free and therefore unaffordable for many.

Hence, the different problems of psychiatric care in Russia discussed above, the historical specificities of the development of psychiatry and its present state still clearly have a negative impact on attitudes towards psychiatric services. I would also argue that such views of psychiatry have an immediate link to the current perception of other mental health services. Psychological literacy among the Russian public has remained low since mental illness and psychiatry were taboo topics in the press and mass media during Soviet times (Cohen 1989: 30). They were not discussed in popular culture either since there was state censorship of all media resources, literature and cinema. This obscurity was a fertile ground for the development of anxiety about mental patients and the fear of becoming mentally ill. In the late 1980s Russia became open to 'western' popular cultural ideas. Morris (2006) problematises the influence of the mass media on the stigmatisation of mental illness because it largely misrepresents the symptoms of disorders, gives ambiguous messages about their origins, and portrays the mentally ill as 'psychos' and killers. The exposure of the Russian public (who had vague prior knowledge on the matter) to such distorted images may have caused further stereotyping of psychological problems and the desire to distance oneself from any encounters with the psychiatry field. At the same time, counselling and psychotherapy services are rather new to Russian society and, despite its rising popularity, research indicates that people tend to confuse different kinds of mental health specialists (Balachova et al. 2001). For example, in his interview with Maureen Cote Alexander B. Orlov, a Moscow psychologist, said:

³¹ Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation, Resolution № 3186-I (1992) On the Order of Introduction of the Law of the Russian Federation On Psychiatric Help and the Guarantees of Rights of the Citizens during Its Provision. Available at < http://www.vcom.ru/cgi-bin/db/zakdoc?_reg_number=%D09202956>. Accessed 20 October 2007.

People are poorly informed about the sort of services that psychologists can provide. They also have a lot of stereotypes and misinformation about what a psychologist does or what psychotherapy is in general. People associate this work with medical psychiatry, because this was the sphere that used to exist under the Soviet Union as part of the government health program. People have some idea what this is, but they have almost no idea of what psychotherapy is (Cote 1998: 37-38).

The public is further confused about the areas of competence of mental health specialists because of the complexities of the educational differences between the specialists and an abundance of different titles, which I discuss in detail later in this chapter. One of the main negative impacts of this situation on the development of counselling is that it can cause problems in the formation of the clientele market (I discuss this point later in this chapter and in Chapter 5).

Soviet Psychology

Similar to psychiatry, the development of psychology in the Soviet Union is also intertwined with history and ideology. Until the 1917 Revolution the ideas of Russian society including theoreticians and philosophers were dominated by Orthodox Church dogmas. Psychology started to evolve in opposition to theological views of human nature. Russian psychology has its roots in the works of such prominent philosophers as Alexander N. Radishchev (1749-1802), Michail V. Lomonosov (1711-1765), Nikolay G. Chernyshevski (1828-1889) and others who struggled against the Tsarist regime and aspired to scientific and materialistic bases for psychological knowledge. One prominent figure was Ivan M. Sechenov (1829-1905) - a famous physiologist who is the 'father' of reflexology theory and who proposed that 'all mental processes are reflexes in character' (Brožek and Slobin 1972: 40). Vladimir M. Bechterev and Sergey S. Korsakov³² (1857-1900) established the first psychological laboratories in 1866 and in 1888 and were leading figures in the psychiatry of that time (Bauer 1975: 3; Umrikhin 1997). This affiliation with psychiatry and physiology 'laid the natural-scientific foundation for Soviet psychology' (McLeish 1975: 67). However, with the development of the Soviet regime this scientific basis was taken to the extreme. The Marxist foundations governing Soviet society led to

³² Sometimes spelled Korsakoff.

the situation where ‘psychology could only become a real science if it were organised on materialist, determinist and dialectical lines’ (Attwood 1990: 34; Sukhodolsky et al. 1995; Umrikhin 1997). The main expectation was that Soviet psychology had to ‘unreservedly place itself at the service of the Communist Party in the struggle to establish socialism’ (McLeish 1957: 107). Psychology became inseparable from ideology.

In the 1920s psychology found itself in a shaky position because there were discussions of whether it was possible to replace it with other disciplines such as physiology or reflexology. The decision was that psychology could continue its existence as long as it adhered to the principles of Marxist-Leninist ideology and the making of the ‘New Soviet Man’³³ (Bauer 1975: 3; Etkind 1997: 64). The idea was that ‘psychology must involve class analysis: in class society, “man in general” is an empty abstraction, for man’s social behaviour is determined by the behaviour of his class’ (Attwood 1990: 33). This implied that the psychology of a Soviet person (who was an outcome of social influences) was supposed to be radically different from people who lived in societies with a capitalist economy (McLeish 1975). In other words, a ‘proper’ Soviet Citizen was supposed to prioritise collective over individual and materialistic over idealistic interests. These ideological biases had a great impact on the development of psychology. In 1950 the Academy of Sciences and Medical Sciences concluded that psychology had to ground itself in dialectical materialism, and that all medical sciences and psychology had to be based on the Pavlovian views of human nature and behaviour, while western theories were to be eliminated from Soviet science (McLeish 1975: 204; Umrikhin 1997). Although on the one hand Pavlov’s theory was eminent and revolutionary at the time, what really made it the basis for all Soviet psychology was its compatibility with Soviet ideology – it was scientific and held a materialist view of human nature.

On the grounds of these methodological principles, several scientific branches of psychology (such as social psychology, industrial psychology, attitude research) were either banned or subjected to close ideological state control (McLeish 1975: 158). For instance, studies in industrial psychology were banned until the late 1950s. Research was done only within ‘approved’ areas. Areas of concern for psychologists were the analyses of learning processes, perception, memory, reflexes, types of nervous systems and mechanisms (O’Connor 1961). Brožek’s (1966: 179) study of Soviet publications shows that the greatest number of works were done in ‘general psychology’ which at that time

³³ In the initial Russian phrase (Novyi sovetskii chelovek) the word ‘*chelovek*’ is used which is translated as ‘person’ or ‘human being’. So the phrase in translation would be ‘the new Soviet person’ and therefore refers to women too. The translation ‘the new Soviet *man*’ is used in English language sources (e.g. Attwood 1990; Bauer 1975; Etkind 1997). The new ‘Soviet man’ was supposed to be a sexless, abstract personality, a new ‘improved edition of men’ (Etkind 1997: 64-65).

included works ‘on physiology of higher nervous activity’, perception, memory, etc. The second most popular position was held by educational and child psychology. There was almost no work on social psychology, which was considered a ‘monopoly of bourgeois psychologists and sociologists’ (Filatov 1963 cited in Brožek 1966: 185).

In the same vein in the 1930s all western ideas on applied therapeutic approaches (e.g. psychoanalysis) were dismissed as ‘inherently idealistic and individualistic, and thus incompatible with Marxism’ (Attwood 1990: 35; Grigorenko et al. 1997). This considerably slowed down the development of practical psychology that only picked up in the late 1960s. The development of clinical (medical) psychology in the Soviet Union is associated with the name of Vladimir N. Miasishchev (1892-1973) who was an enthusiastic supporter of the integration of psychology into medicine and was one of the main supporters of the concept of individual personality in Soviet psychology (Balachova et al. 2001; Etkind 1997; Wasserman et al. 2004). The works of Lev S. Vygotsky (1896-1934), the founder of cultural-historical psychology, Alexander R. Luria (1902-1977), who worked in the field of neuropsychology, Alexey N. Leontiev (1903-1979), who developed activity theory in psychology, Blooma V. Zeigarnik (1900-1988), who was a leading psychopathologist, and other prominent scholars made a significant contribution to the field of clinical psychology. However, these contributions were mainly theoretical as actual counselling and therapy methods were not in the focus of Soviet psychological science because of the prevailing ideology. This is how Larisa A. Petrovskaya, a prominent Russian psychologist, commented on the situation in the interview with Maureen Cote:

It was purely research psychology. We did not have counselling therapies. More exactly, therapy existed but only on the medical model for treating extremely sick people and not for working with healthy people who wanted to improve the quality of their lives and solve emotional problems. The government and communist party usurped all means of working with people. The party claimed to resolve all problems, including those that were psychological or purely personal (1998: 202).

Medical (clinical) psychology as a profession in Russia emerged only in the 1970s due to the demand to reconcile psychiatry and its biological views of human nature with a more humanistic view of the identity and personality of the patient (Groisman and Makarov 1999). This change increased the importance of the role of psychotherapists and medical psychologists and the development of a multi-agency approach to mental care. However, counselling as an applied field of psychology mainly started to receive attention

from the late 1980s – early 1990s when a number of prominent psychologists (Carl Rogers, Virginia Satire, Viktor Frankl) visited the Soviet Union.

To conclude, the development of psychology in the Soviet Union has certain implications for its present development. On the one hand, it was strongly conflated with ideology, but because it was mostly scientific and did not have such notorious ‘applications’ as psychiatry its image did not suffer as much in the eyes of the general public. On the other hand, the theoretical and ideological skew in Soviet psychology largely determined the nature of university education in the field (and does so to this day). For example, many psychologists whom I interviewed complained about the lack of practical aspects in psychological education (I come back to this point later in this chapter and in Chapter 3). Moreover, the materialist basis of Russian psychology and its isolation from the western psychological community affected the development of the therapeutic approaches (Etkind 1997; Vasilyeva 2000).

The Development of Psychotherapy

The development of psychotherapy in the Soviet Union was shaped by the existing ideology (as were other branches of the mental health professions discussed above) and by the fact that it originated as a specialisation in medicine. Psychotherapeutic schools before 1917 were developing in dialogue with their western counterparts; however, this development was interrupted by the Soviet regime (Etkind 1997; Havenaar et al. 1998). In terms of approaches and techniques psychotherapy in the Soviet Union was very limited. One of the reasons for this was the lack of opportunities for communication and exchange of experiences between Soviet Russia and the ‘West’. Most of the western theories, as I have pointed out, were condemned as ‘bourgeois’ inventions and were prohibited as contradicting Soviet ideology (Balachova et al. 2004; Kozulin 1984; McLeish 1975; Sukhodolsky 1995). For instance, psychoanalysis was illegal until the late 1980s (Etkind 1997; Valisieva 2000). The limited number of psychotherapeutic approaches and methods that did exist were (similarly to psychiatry and psychology) mainly based on physiological and behavioural models due to the strong influence of Pavlovian ideas and materialism (Bloch and Reddaway 1984; Sukhodolsky et al. 1995). In terms of its theoretical underpinnings psychotherapy boiled down to a mere range of techniques rather than a coherent theory, but even the techniques were not taught comprehensively. As Kirman (1966) points out, psychotherapy was taught in medical universities but the course was mainly aimed at teaching students to recognise and diagnose different types of mental

disorders (and the emphasis was mostly on the study of severe illnesses) and there was little opportunity for a student to learn psychotherapeutic techniques as such. The techniques used by psychiatrists and psychotherapists in dispensaries were mostly hypnosis, ‘suggestive methods’, sleep therapy, electroshock, physiotherapy and explanation (see Cohen 1989; Etkind 1997; Kirman 1966; Valisyeva 2000; Winn 1960). As Krasnov and Gurovich (2006: 113) write, the ‘system [of psychotherapeutic treatment] was based on the principle of paternalism, in which the physician was completely responsible for the patient, [and] the treatment... It was very far from partnership: the physician had a dominant position in all aspects of the care’. Psychotherapy was meant to treat the disease (or symptom or syndrome) and not the person or personality (Segal 1977; Vasilyeva 2000).

Psychotherapy as a method of treatment was assigned a secondary and ‘helping’ role in the process of the treatment of mental conditions. On paper, the ‘ideal’ model of treatment for mental illnesses in the Soviet Union included biological, physiological and social approaches³⁴ (Vasilyeva 2006). However, because psychotherapy was the exclusive domain of psychiatrists the predominant assumption was that mental illness was of a biological nature and required mainly drug treatment. The psychological aspect is described in *The Large [sic!] Soviet Encyclopaedia* as follows:

Psychotherapy is a treatment influencing a patient psychologically. The general task of psychotherapy is the creation of favourable conditions for treatment, the production of the correct attitude in the patient to the treatment prescribed for him (drugs, physiotherapy etc.), assistance in restoring harmony and in the prevention of traumatic psychological factors, and in the removal of psychogenic symptoms (1961: cited in Kirman 1966: 57).

This definition shows that psychotherapy had only a supportive role while the main treatment was physiological. As several authors (Bloch and Raddaway 1977; Kirman 1966; Segal 1977) point out, one of the main goals of any therapy was to explain to the patient what was happening to him or her and suggest a concrete scheme for correct behaviour. Usually the doctor would give direct recommendations and suggestions about managing difficult life situations or other problems. But medication remained the primary method of treatment.

Psychotherapy started to shift from a biomedical to a psychosomatic and biopsychosocial model in the 1970s. The first university department of psychotherapy was

³⁴ The social aspect of the therapy included mostly work therapy, as work was considered a tool of major importance for forming the ‘proper’ Soviet citizen (Bloch and Raddaway 1977). This however was mainly used for rehabilitation.

established in the USSR in Kharkov in 1962 due to the need to enhance the theoretical foundations of the field (Groisman and Makarov 1999). As Vasilyeva (2006: 31) indicates, the formation of psychotherapy as an independent medical discipline was conditioned by the softening of the Soviet regime, a growth in mental disorders, the development of medical psychology and the influence of foreign scholars. The gap between Soviet and western psychotherapy slowly began to decrease. Today, psychotherapy is a separate method of treatment of disorders. Western theories were allowed into Russia in the 1980s and now a wide range of psychotherapeutic methods is practised among specialists (Balachova et al. 2001; Cote 1998; Havenaar et al. 1998). The most popular approaches are existential therapy and family systems therapy (Manichev and Mileshkina 2006).

The fact that applied psychology was suppressed and psychotherapy was considered to be 'secondary' to drug treatment resulted in a rather slow development of psychological schools and therapy approaches in Russia. However, specialists tend to 'adapt' western therapies to the Russian context. Moreover several new therapeutic methods have been developed by Russian psychologists and psychotherapists (e.g. Zinkevich-Evstigneeva (2007), Belyakova (2000), Koloshina and Timoshenko (2001)). As one of my interviewees said:

The big minus is that we have no School, I mean theoretical school. And the great advantage is that because people here didn't know that they were reinventing the wheel, they've invented so many of them! [laughs] And they've invented something that doesn't exist anywhere else in the world! [laughs]. Both in theory and in practical therapy. And although we still study a lot of stuff coming from abroad I have a strong belief that there is stuff that they can already learn from us. I wouldn't say it is widely accepted in Europe but it is so. (MF14)

Another major problem in the development of psychotherapy in the Soviet Union is that at its inception, it was the exclusive domain of the medical system. This fact still creates a problem of sharing the jurisdiction. Although medical psychology has contributed much to the development of psychotherapy, psychologists are not allowed to practise psychotherapy or can do so only under the supervision of a medical doctor (Balachova et al. 2001; Karvasarsky 2008; Sukhodolsky 1995; Vasilyeva 2000). The paradox however is that in today's Russia the majority of specialists who actually study various therapeutic approaches in depth and practise the actual techniques *are* psychologists. There are several reasons for this. The adherence of psychotherapists to the medical model of mental

conditions still persists today: as Tukaev (2008: 68) shows about 90% of psychotherapists prescribe medication to patients in the first session. Due to the lack of psychotherapists³⁵ specialists often do not have enough time to conduct psychotherapy if they work in medical institutions. Therefore clinical psychologists do this work (Reshetnikov 2000; 2003; Vasilyeva 2006). Moreover, psychotherapists are not required to have extra training in therapy methods because technically they are allowed to practise any, just by virtue of their certificate (Reshetnikov 2000). Psychologists are not allowed by law to prescribe medication. Hence, various psychotherapeutic approaches are their only tool, which, ironically, they are not officially allowed to use either (Balachova et al. 2004; Reshetnikov 2003). This situation continues to create tensions between different branches of the mental health professions (I develop this discussion in Chapter 6).

To further understand the complexity of the on-going debates about professional jurisdiction, which have a significant influence on the development of counselling today, I shall explain the process of training for mental health degrees and the contemporary state of the counselling services in Russia. However, before doing this let me first touch upon another aspect of the multifaceted process of the professionalisation of counselling: some of the background to its 'female face'.

Women in Medicine and the Mental Health Professions in Russia

So far I have focused on a general discussion of the branches of mental health professions and their relationship to Soviet ideology and politics. In this section, I discuss women's presence in the medical professions since psychological counselling is a profession allied to medicine, and the gender distribution within medicine is relevant to the emergence of gender patterns in psychology.

Women's relation to medicine and healing has a long tradition in Russia. For several centuries women healers were the only medical authority in the countryside. Glickman (1991: 151) writes:

³⁵ The existing number of psychotherapists is virtually impossible to obtain. Different scholarly sources have different figures. Vasilyeva (2006) writes that in 2004 there were only 2000 doctors with a specialisation in psychotherapy and approximately 17000 psychiatrists in Russia. However, another source (Gilbert and Shiryayev 1992) shows the figure of 2000 psychotherapists for 1991. A later study cites the figure of 3000 psychotherapists in 2003 (Reshetnikov 2003). The authors do not specify the source of their statistics. However, most of the aforementioned studies agree that this specialisation is not popular because the training takes longer and because the specialisation is only a subcategory of psychiatry and not as prestigious. Thus, there are not enough of these specialists (Balachova et al. 2001).

In principle, practitioners of folk medicine [in Russia] fell into two categories – healers (*znakharki*^[36]) and witches (*kolduny*). Both derived their powers from an interplay of mundane skill and supernatural forces. Healers, mainly female, derived their powers from God or his entourage of saints and performed only beneficial, curative services, whereas witches negotiated with unclear spirits and visited on their victims physical and mental illness as well as other forms of malevolence... [M]ost ‘professional’ witches [...] were male.

Hence the healers in Russia were primarily women. Their knowledge and the use of folk medicine covered all kinds of physical and mental illnesses (Glickman 1991: 154). The official religion (Orthodox Christianity) recognized *znakharka* as a legitimate ‘profession’ (Glickman 1991). In contrast to Western Europe the witch-hunt was never that extensive in Russia and most of the accused witches were men (almost 70%). Healers were also not prosecuted (Kivelson 1991: 83). Healers were primarily elderly women who had no male relatives and had to earn their living. Women often chose to be *znakharkas* because they had no better alternatives, and they could sustain themselves and their children through this. They were independent and had a high status and the respect of the community (Glickman 1991: 162). *Znakharkas* continued to have trust among people even after the first university-educated doctors came to practise in villages.³⁷ However, healing in the countryside (including educated doctors) usually did not entail being rich (ibid.: 157).

Conventional medicine was also one of the first professional careers available to women in Russia (together with teaching and pharmacy). In the mid-1850s medical education became accessible to women and by 1914 over 1000 female physicians graduated from medical schools every year. However, female doctors often met with hostile attitudes from their male colleagues and had lower salaries than the latter (McDermid and Hillyar 1998). Since the 1920s the medical profession in the Soviet Union has gradually become feminised and the share of female physicians grew from 10% in 1913 to 72% in the 1970s³⁸ (Riska 2001). In the 1970s 46.9% of women doctors had candidate and doctoral³⁹ degrees and 53% of chief physicians and heads of public health institutions were women (Dodge 1978: 209-213). Women continued to dominate in medicine after perestroika and comprised about 69% of doctors in the 1990s (Riska 2001).

³⁶ The word *znakharka* has the same root as the word *znat'* (to know), so literally the word means ‘the one who knows’.

³⁷ Another female-dominated ‘medical’ profession that was much honored in Russian peasant society was midwifery (*povitukha*) (see Glickman 1991).

³⁸ In the same year there were only 7% of women physicians in the United States. In Great Britain, France and Italy the percentage ranged from 13 to 20 (Dodge 1978: 209).

³⁹ Post-graduate degrees.

As Harden (2001: 195) notes, both horizontal and vertical segregation in the medical profession existed in the Soviet Union, but nonetheless, women's presence in medicine in such large numbers was significant.

The overall feminisation of medicine in Russia is quite well documented. However, there are almost no official gender statistics on the ratio of men and women in the mental health professions: all statistical documents usually just provide the overall number of doctors. Riska (2001) points out that psychiatry as a specialisation was usually chosen by men. In contrast, Navarro (1977) states that the proportion of women among psychiatrists was about 60-70%. The gender distribution within psychotherapy and psychology is even more obscure.⁴⁰ In the absence of reliable figures, it is only possible to speculate that due to the overall high number of women in the field of medicine women may not have dominated in psychiatry and psychotherapy but still constituted a high percentage. Despite the lack of statistics, it is clear that there is a 'tradition' of the feminisation of different branches of medicine in Russia (Navarro 1977; Riska 2001) and as I show later in this thesis (Chapters 3 and 5), the gender distribution in psychological counselling (as professions allied to medicine) exhibits similar patterns of feminisation.

Another way in which the feminisation of medicine is relevant to the formation of the gender distribution within counselling today is the following: many women who came into counselling in the 1990s were mature returning students who already had a degree. As Rotkirch and Temkina (1996) found in their study of psychoanalysts in Russia, most of the people who did this training as their second higher education degree had been working in the neighbouring fields of psychotherapy, psychiatry and scientific psychology. Thus, medicine can partially be a 'source of supply' of specialists in the field of counselling.

As I have already mentioned in the Introduction, there are no official statistics of the number of female counsellors in Russia. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that the field is largely female-dominated (Karandashev 1998; Mileshekina 2007). All of my 26 interviewees reported that when they studied for their degree there were only a few men on their course. The data obtained from my personal communication with several psychology departments in four universities in Russia⁴¹ show that the percentage of accepted male students fluctuates throughout the years from as low as 1-2% to about 20% (in St. Petersburg State University). As was stated in the e-mail I received from the psychology department of Voronezh State University:

⁴⁰ Anecdotal evidence and my interviewees (MF14, MF12) suggest that the gender distribution in Soviet psychology was close to equal. However, vertical segregation patterns seemed to persist: for instance, according to Brožek (1966: 191) out of 3205 participants of the Psychology Congress in Leningrad in 1963, about 70% were men.

⁴¹ I sent e-mails to 25 universities, responses were received from St. Petersburg State University, Voronezh State University, Samara State University and Far Eastern National University.

We usually take about 60 full-time undergraduate students a year, most of them are girls. The number of male students is usually 2-6 people but not more than that, moreover, most of them drop out or are expelled (E. Lisova, e-mail communication, 22 January 2008).

The enrolment situation is the same when one looks at second higher education degree courses.⁴² For example, one of my interviewees from Vladivostok who was the Head of the Faculty of Psychology made the following comment about the application rate and enrolment:

Well, not only are there more of them [women] but they are the dominant majority! Each year we have about 40 students in our [second higher education] groups, and about three and ‘a half’ of them are men [laughs]... Same with the first higher education groups. Only one or two men in a group and actually if there are you should be extremely happy about that... (VF3)

As I have already mentioned in the Introduction, women also constitute the majority of graduate and postgraduate students in psychology (about 70%). Thus, although partly absent from the statistics, the feminisation of the field is evident. This, as I show in the following chapters, has particular implications for the development of the counselling profession and for the position of women in it.

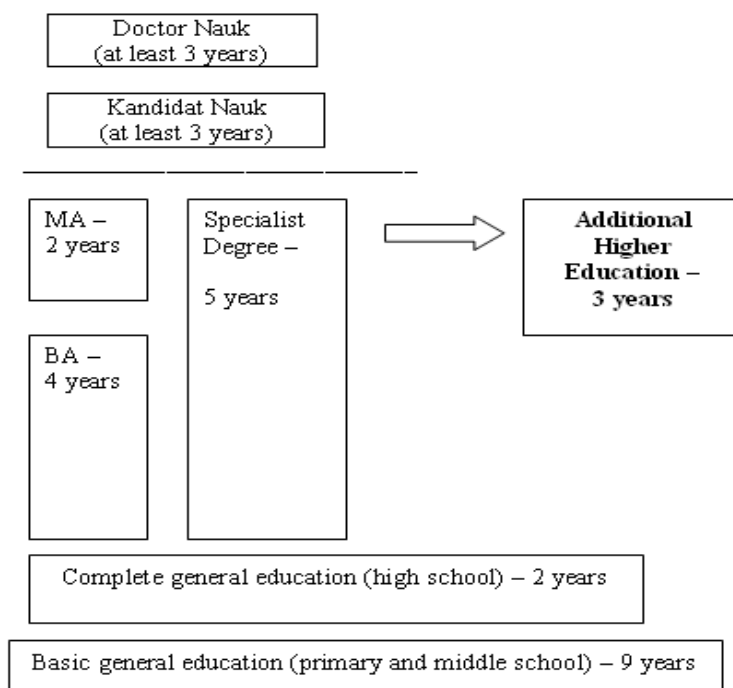
Education and qualifications

So far in this chapter I have shown that due to ideological reasons the development of psychological counselling as such became possible only when the control of the state began to decline (Cote 1998; Vasilyeva 2006). On the other hand, there is a long tradition of the presence of women in medicine, healing and mental health services in Russia. Now, in order to complete the multifaceted picture of the present state of counselling in Russia I come back to the question of the professional qualifications of specialists in mental health fields and their training in order to explain how various specificities of Russian higher education influence the development of the profession.

⁴² A second higher education is available to those who already have a university degree and usually entails a shorter period of study than the first degree (I explain this in detail in the next section of this chapter).

Full higher education at undergraduate level in the Soviet Union was a five-year programme (full-time) completed at a university or institute. The degree of ‘Specialist’ was granted upon graduation. Two degrees served as postgraduate qualifications: the degree of Candidate of Science (from 3 years full-time) and the Doctor of Science (from 3 years full-time). The same system still operated in 2007 (see Kasevich 2006). However, in 1996 the Federal Law of the Russian Federation on Higher and Post-Graduate Education⁴³ introduced the qualifications of Bachelor (4 years) and Masters (2 years) (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The System of Education in Russia



Source: <<http://www.euroeducation.net/prof/russco.htm>>. Accessed 27 October 2008.

It is now possible to get a BA degree in psychology or a Specialist degree (Karandashev 1998; 2006; see also Kasevich 2006). However, Karandashev (2006: 60) writes that ‘specialist programs [in psychology] are designed to allow students to pursue both educational and professional goals, while Bachelor programs aim only at educational goals and do not seek to prepare professional psychologists’.⁴⁴ Thus, psychologists who practice

⁴³ State Duma of the Federal Assembly of Russian Federation, Federal Law №125-FL On Higher and Post-Graduate Professional Education, 22.08.1996. Available at < http://www.vcom.ru/cgi-bin/db/zakdoc?_reg_number=%D09604175>. Accessed 27 October 2007.

⁴⁴ The introduction of new degrees varies from university to university. In my university (Far Eastern National University, Vladivostok) there was an option to get a BA degree in our 4th year. Those who chose to do so had to write a dissertation and pass a comprehensive exam at the end of the 4th year. Then most students stayed for the 5th year to obtain a Specialist degree for which one had to write another dissertation and pass another comprehensive exam. Most of the students preferred to pursue a Specialist degree after getting a BA since there was a worry that potential employers would not recognise a new type of degree.

counselling usually have a Specialist degree in psychology. Medical universities⁴⁵ where basic higher education takes 6 years (plus from one to three years of residency training and specialisation) have not yet changed to the new degree system. Many professionals and authorities in Russia assert that the BA/MA system is not quite suitable for medical (and some other types of) education because of the reduction of time in education that will reduce the quality and extent of knowledge that specialists get (Arganovich 2007).

There are usually several modes of study available at universities: full-time, evening classes, extra-mural education (which means that students normally study at home and once or twice a year they have 2-3 months' long sessions of classes and exams at the university). The specificity of the Russian system of higher education is the existence of the so-called second/additional higher education degree programs. The majority of my interviewees were graduates of second higher education courses (see Chapter 2). Obtaining a second university degree usually takes three (instead of the usual five) years as these programs are designed to re-educate people who already have a higher education degree in a different field (Karandashev 1998; 2006). If the first university degree in Russia is mostly free (although rather competitive), the second/third one has to be paid for and is rather expensive (I discuss this in Chapter 3). In the early 1990s re-trainers were also able to obtain a certificate in psychology after graduating from 9-month courses, but later these programs were scrapped (Karandashev 1998).

The Training of Specialists in Mental Health

There are various differences in degree requirements for psychiatrists, psychotherapists and psychologists (counsellors). The decree On Psychiatric and Psychotherapeutic Help⁴⁶ gives the following definitions:

A psychiatrist has a university degree in medicine with a specialisation in psychiatry. Patients are people who suffer from mental disorders and who are in need of receiving treatment in the in-patient or out-patient clinic. These people normally need medical or counselling assistance and dispensary's monitoring (n.p.).

⁴⁵ Medical universities in Russia are separate institutions and medical schools are rarely part of larger universities (one of the few examples is the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia). The education is usually longer than for other university degrees (usually 6 years plus 1-3 years of residency and specialisation).

⁴⁶ See footnote 24.

A degree in psychiatry can only be obtained from a medical university. The process of acquiring a degree in psychiatry has not changed since Soviet times and still presumes a general medical education and a specialisation in psychiatry. Generally, psychiatrists use the biological model of mental disorders and the main method of treatment they use is drug therapy (Reshetnikov 2000). Psychiatrists usually work with more severe cases than other mental health specialists do. Normally they work only in medical settings and institutions. Psychotherapy represents a slightly more complex case than psychiatry. By law⁴⁷:

A Psychotherapist is a specialist who has a university degree in medicine, has spent at least 3 years working in the field of psychiatry and then undertook a specialisation in psychotherapy. Patients are people with neurosis, other borderline disorders, psychiatric patients in the stage of remission and other people who need psychological counselling (n.p.).

According to the decree on Classification of the Occupations in the Medical Institutions of the Russian Federation,⁴⁸ which still operates, there is *no separate profession of psychotherapy*: only psychiatrists and psychologists. Thus, technically, psychotherapy is a specialisation within medicine. In fact, it only became a recognised specialisation in 1985 and that is when the title appeared too (Reshetnikov 2000). The Law quoted above outlines that a psychotherapist should have experience in psychiatry and extra training in therapy methods. However, the training in therapy approaches is usually rather superficial: during the 288-hour training one is taught 44 different methods of psychotherapy (about seven hours for one approach) and then required to pass an exam (Reshetnikov 2003: 12). Nonetheless, psychotherapy specialisation allows practising any therapy: no extra certificate or training is required. Psychotherapists usually work in medical settings but can have a private practice or work in private counselling centres. Because psychotherapists are effectively doctors, unlike psychologists, they can prescribe medications (Balachova et al. 2001).

As for psychologists, according to the State Educational Standard of Higher Professional Education of the Russian Federation⁴⁹ there are two official types of psychological qualification (with the following titles stated on the certificates):

⁴⁷ See footnote 23.

⁴⁸ Ministry of Public Health of the Russian Federation, Decree № 337 On Classification of Occupations in the Medical Institutions of Russian Federations. 27.08.1999. Available at <http://www.vcom.ru/cgi-bin/db/zakdoc?_reg_number=%C29902966>. Accessed 31 October 2007.

⁴⁹ State Educational Standard of the Higher Professional Education, 2000. Available at <http://www.edu.ru/db/cgi-bin/portal/spe/list_search.plx?substr=%EF%F1%E8%F5%EE%EB%EE%E3> Accessed 20 October 2007.

Psychologist/Lecturer in Psychology and Clinical Psychologist/Lecturer in Psychology. The former is a general qualification which can be obtained from most universities. It is a 5-year Specialist degree in psychology⁵⁰ that allows one to teach psychology,⁵¹ be a researcher in psychology and/or be a professional counsellor in psychology (Balachova et al. 2004; Karansashev 2006). The qualification in clinical psychology is a recent one: it was included in the list of professional specialities by decree of the Ministry of Education only in 1997.⁵² It required a 5-year specialist degree program but it can be obtained from either a medical or a non-medical university. The definition of the title ‘clinical psychologist’ given in the decree On the Professional Training of Medical Psychologists for the Institutions that Provide Psychiatric and Psychotherapeutic Help⁵³ is:

A Medical (clinical) psychologist has a university degree in medical (clinical) psychology. The patients/clients are all people who have a prescription from a doctor to undergo psychological diagnostics and assessment and/or psychological correction. Usually works in a team with a doctor (psychiatrist and/or psychotherapist). A clinical psychologist can provide psychophylaxis, psychodiagnosis, correction and psychological counselling services. Consults patients as well as their relatives and can carry out career-orientation guidance for clients (n.p.).

According to the State Educational Standard of Higher Professional Education,⁵⁴ specialists in psychology can work in many spheres of the national economy including education, management, social aid etc. They can perform a broad range of activities such as diagnosis and intervention, expert and counselling services, work in education and science. Clinical psychologists can also provide such services as disease prevention and rehabilitation. One of the main differences between the two qualifications in psychology is that clinical psychologists are specially trained and are mainly meant (although not forced) to work in medical settings. However, they can also work in private settings and/or teach.

⁵⁰ A specialist degree in psychology can also include specialisations in e.g. educational psychology, social psychology, industrial psychology (Karandashev 1998). This usually means that in the fourth and/or fifth year of study one has extra modules in the area of specialisation. Some universities do not offer any specialisation. No matter what specialisation, the degree title will still be ‘psychologist/lecturer in psychology’.

⁵¹ It allows one to be a lecturer. However, for senior academic positions one needs a Candidate degree or a doctorate.

⁵² Ministry of General and Professional Education of Russian Federation, Decree № 2719 On Additions and Partial Change of Classification of Majors and Professions of the Higher Professional Education. 30.12.1997. Available at < http://www.vcom.ru/cgi-bin/db/zakdoc?_reg_number=%C29705148>. Accessed 27 October 2007.

⁵³ See footnote 23.

⁵⁴ See footnote 49.

The Process and Problems of Training in Psychology

Despite the problems with titles and responsibilities, the content of a psychology degree does not vary much throughout the country since educational standards in Russia are unified and state controlled (Balachova et al. 2004; Gilbert and Shiryaev 1992). The Law on Higher and Post-Graduate University Education (1996) declares that there is a state standard for every profession in the higher education system. Universities receive a list of recommended subjects for a certain degree, recommended syllabi for taught courses (with suggested topics to cover) and approximate numbers of hours for each course. Universities can vary the course content slightly and there are possibilities to have a number of courses developed individually by professors.

One of the problems with the existing standards of education that were cited by my interviewees and that are discussed in the literature is the vagueness of the professional competency requirements and the heavy emphasis on theory both of which lead to the lowering of counselling standards (Gilbert and Shiryaev 1992; Ivannikov 2006). However, I would argue that the two are just aspects of the same problem: the psychology degree in the format in which it is presently delivered is not suited for training *practical* psychologists.

My interviewees mentioned that the common perception in the field was that the descriptions and qualification criteria for both psychological specialities are quite vague:

There are no criteria by which to judge whether this person is a good psychologist or not... When you graduate from a ballet school it is clear what you are supposed to be able to do – say, thirty fouettés, thirty kinds of jumps and pas and so on. What should a psychologist be able to do when he graduates? Nobody knows... He himself doesn't know... (MF10)

However, if one looks at the state standards for psychological education the outline is quite detailed. For instance, the State Educational Standard⁵⁵ outlines the subjects which a psychologist should know. The list includes basic disciplines such as anatomy; physiology; general experimental, social, clinical and other branches of psychology; psychopathology; neuropsychology; theories of psychotherapy; foundations of counselling; psychiatry, etc. All in all, training for this degree requires one to pass on average about 70 (!) modules. Each module is followed by an oral exam and there is a comprehensive exam at the end of a degree. So technically, it is quite clear what kind of *theoretical knowledge* a

⁵⁵ See footnote 49

psychologist is supposed to have. The problem is that it is not clear what one is supposed to know in terms of practical methods. Particular approaches or techniques of psychotherapy are not usually taught in universities, as they are not part of the curriculum. The student receives a general idea about each branch of psychotherapy (from 2-30 hours allocated to each) and but never gets to see how it works or to try it out.

My interviewees admitted that on the one hand, the theoretical nature of their degree opens opportunities to work in different branches of psychology, but on the other hand, it does not necessarily ensure the appropriate level of counselling quality after graduation:

You know a lot of our graduates are convinced that, after they've obtained the diploma of 'psychologist, lecturer in psychology' they have a right to start their own private practice. They do not take into account the necessity to gain fundamental *practical* specialisation... Universities give classical academic education... and any person should realise that if he or she is going for that classical academic psychological education, he or she must also put in loads of money and effort into training practical skills in order take this path of counselling and psychotherapy. (VF1)

The State Standard⁵⁶ does allocate a certain amount of hours for mandatory internships for students. The 'introductory internship' lasts about 2-3 weeks and takes place in the first year of study. It usually includes general field trips to potential work places. 'Practical skills' internships (during the 3rd-4th year of study) last about 12 weeks. Students get individual placements and are expected to learn practical skills while assisting a psychologist/psychotherapist/psychiatrist. 'Pre-qualification internships' (last semester of the 5th year) last about 10 weeks. Students are supposed to get individual placements in the branch of psychology that relates to the area of their thesis research (Karandashev 1998; 2006).

The number and the length of internships may produce an impression of a very intensive training. However, the reality is often quite different. As a former student in psychology, I can say that if one is lucky enough to get a good placement then these internships can be useful for gaining hands-on experience. Otherwise many students end up doing routine paperwork or other work not relevant to psychology at all.⁵⁷ Students are usually not allowed to interact directly with clients while watching sessions. Another

⁵⁶ See footnote 49.

⁵⁷ One of my colleagues spent her internship in the library trying to find material for her supervisor's dissertation. Such things however do not happen often now.

problem is that psychologists who are supervising students may not be trained in any particular methods themselves and may have no interest in the students since they are usually not paid (or paid very little) for supervision. Thus, graduates end up having few practical skills. This was not a great problem in the Soviet Union: a psychology graduate normally went on to work in teaching or research (for the reasons I described earlier in this chapter) or was allocated work after graduation where s/he could learn practical skills on the job (see Clarke 2000; Roberts et al. 2000). It is however, a problem now.

The difficulty of reconciling theory and practice in this profession is not an easy one. The way in which, for instance, the American Psychological Association deals with this, is by requiring a very extensive period of both theoretical training (in an accredited program) and practical training in order to be able to practise. Not only is one required to have a degree, one also has to secure a certain amount of work experience under supervision, personal therapy and take a practical oral exam in order to actually get a licence to practise. From start to finish it takes at least 23 years to achieve the licensure stage in America (Hall and Hurley 2003). In Russia, there is no quality control after graduation from university either from the state or from professional organizations (I discuss this point and the problem of licensing in Chapters 3 and 6).

This niche of providing extra practical training in counselling techniques was quickly occupied by different sorts of private courses in post-socialist Russia. First of all, many certified private institutes (e.g. the Moscow Institute of Psychotherapy and Clinical Psychology, the Institute of Group and Family Psychology and Psychotherapy, the Institute of Practical Psychology and Psychoanalysis, etc.) provide workshops and short-term training on a wide range of psychotherapeutic methods and techniques. There are also smaller organizations or private centres that provide similar services (e.g. the Gestalt-Centre of Nina Rubstein, etc.). All organizations that provide training must be licensed and by the end of the course the participants get a certificate which allows them to practise a certain method of psychotherapy.⁵⁸ One is not required to undertake extra professional education. However, a recent study of psychologists showed that about 80% of specialists had undertaken some kind of qualifications up-grade after they got their university degree and about 30% have various certificates in particular psychotherapeutic methods (Manichev and Mileshkina 2006). All of my interviewees also actively engaged in extra training (for the reasons I explore in Chapter 3).

⁵⁸ A popular qualification in Russia nowadays is psychoanalyst. However, psychoanalysis is not recognised as a separate profession in Russia. It is a qualification that can be gained through additional professional training like that described above.

According to the decree of the Establishment of Temporary List of Types of Medical Occupations Subjected to Licensing⁵⁹ *psychiatric and psychotherapeutic* services must be licensed. However, *psychological* services do not fall under this decree. Although psychologists may receive certified training they are not required to have a licence for their private practice. A person with a Specialist degree in psychology who has a certificate for practising a certain type of psychotherapy can practise it, although as I have already mentioned, technically it is called counselling.

To sum up, the complexity of the educational systems and the differences and similarities in qualifications of the specialists have specific consequences for the development of psychology in Russia. Although the titles of mental health specialists and technical names of the services they can perform are regulated, *de facto* the border between the methods of intervention – psychotherapy and counselling - is blurred. This fact together with a rather low level of psychological literacy among the general public (Samykina and Mileshkina 2006; Varga 1999) adds to the persistence of a rather vague image of the duties of a psychologist. This is further complicated in Russia by the abundance of other psychological titles. For instance, a psychologist who passed a certification in psychoanalysis is called a ‘psychoanalyst’, someone trained in Gestalt may put ‘Gestalt therapist’ on a business card. Psychologists call themselves ‘practical psychologists’, ‘counsellors’, ‘therapists’ and while these titles are not official, they are used to distinguish those who mainly work with clients from those who do theoretical research. However, people who use psychological services may not necessarily be aware of these differences. Thus, although the general psychological awareness among people has increased (20% of people in 2005 did not have any idea about the work of psychologists compared to 85% in 1994 (Samykina and Mileshkina 2006)), as I show in Chapter 4 this knowledge is still quite contingent.

The Current State of Counselling

The process of the development of counselling is rather controversial. On the one hand, there has been a clear increase in attention to psychology and an increase in its popularity as an occupation. On the other hand, the understanding of who a psychologist is and of what counselling does, is not yet fully internalised by the Russian public (Cote 1998).

⁵⁹ Ministry of Public Health and Medical Industry of the Russian Federation Decree № 270 On Establishment of Temporary List of Types of Medical Occupations, which are Subjected to Licensing, 01.07.1996. Available at <http://www.vcom.ru/cgi-bin/db/zakdoc?_reg_number=%C29601427>. Accessed 31 October 2007.

As I have outlined in the Introduction the number of psychologists has rapidly increased since the 1990s. The interest in psychology has also increased among the general public and in the mass media. There is much information about psychological and counselling centres and programmes in the mass media and on the internet. When I entered 'psychological help' as a search phrase in Russian Google 2,700,000 links came up in 2007 and 25,300,000 in January 2010. About 2,050,000 results were found for the request 'consult a psychologist' in 2007 and 7,960,000 in 2010. In a popular online book shop⁶⁰ there were around 4428 books available under the section 'Psychology'. Psychologists feature as experts in all mass media. As one of my interviewees said:

I think today there is a lot of propaganda of psychology: counsellors are invited to different programs or asked to comment on something... Everywhere you go there is some opinion of some psychologist... (MF7)

Psychologists are invited to participate as experts on various TV programmes (eg. *Lolita. Bez Kompleksov*⁶¹, *Pust' Govoryat*⁶², etc.). In 2004-2005 the TV Channel *Domashnyi* launched a talk-show programme during which actual psychotherapeutic sessions were performed (*Doctor Kurpatov*⁶³). In 2006 this programme was broadcast on Channel 1 (the main state channel). In 2005 the popular monthly magazine *Psychologies* was launched in Russia.⁶⁴ There are at least several articles every month on psychological matters or featuring a psychology expert in such popular newspapers as *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *Isvestiya*, *Argumenty I Fakty*. There are also plenty of workshops and psychological training available.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Ozon online bookshop. <www.ozon.ru>. Accessed 20 October 2007.

⁶¹ The show is called *Lolita. Get Rid of Your Complexes*. One of the popular daytime talk shows where the host (Lolita) talks to participants (mostly women) and proposes to get rid of their shyness, anxieties and complexes and help them lead a new free life. There is always an 'expert' present who is a psychologist or psychotherapist.

<http://www.1tv.ru/owa/win/ort5_peredach.peredach?p_shed_name_id=5686&p_alphabet_id=%C0>. Accessed 31 October 2007.

⁶² The show is called *Let Them Talk*. A popular prime-time talk show where the participants tell some intriguing life story and a group of 'experts' (famous politicians, actors, scientists, psychologists etc.) express their view on the problem.

<http://www.1tv.ru/owa/win/ort5_peredach.peredach?p_shed_name_id=5685&p_alphabet_id=%C0>. Accessed 31 October 2007.

⁶³ For detailed information see

<http://www.1tv.ru/owa/win/ort5_peredach.peredach?p_shed_name_id=5710&p_alphabet_id=%C0>. Accessed 5 April 2009.

⁶⁴ For detailed information see <www.psychologies.ru> Accessed 22 October 2007.

⁶⁵ There are many psychological services that seem to target mainly women. Many agencies promote women's groups programs covering a large variety of topics from 'How to get married in three months' and 'Discovering the goddess in yourself' to 'Female leadership' (I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 5). There are special series of self-help literature for women (e.g. *How to Be a Bitch at...* [work, home, relationship etc.], *The New Amazons* etc.). No similar literature for men is available (see Karepova 2007).

Although my interviewees gave the mass media some credit for raising people's awareness of psychology, they were also unhappy with the fact that this distorted the image of the profession:

There are a lot of programs on television that invite counsellors, and psychologists are invited practically everywhere as experts and the situation [when people do not know of and are afraid of these services] is changing. Although sometimes psychologists on TV talk such rubbish [laughs] that, you know, I sort of feel ashamed that they belong to the profession... (MF18)

For some reason the 'weird' people are so vocal and so bloody loud and for some reason they are all on TV! And it creates the impression that psychologists are just a mob of lunatics. And this is of course a huge disadvantage to our profession... (MF12)

However, in spite of these concerns, the media indeed stimulated interest. The prestige of psychological knowledge in society has increased since the 1990s. The majority of my interviewees said that overall, there had been a gradual change in the level of psychological literacy among people:

[People have] become aware that psychology is not for sick but for healthy people. It means that the attitude towards psychology is gradually changing. (VF1)

I think this profession stopped being something exotic. I think at the beginning of the 90s a psychologist was something even more exotic than a ballerina... (MF2)

Thus, the people have gradually become more accustomed to the existence of counselling services since the early 1990s. However, as I show in Chapter 4 people's knowledge about certain aspects of the psychological profession (e.g. the duties of an organisational psychologist) can still sometimes remain low.

It is difficult to say what the *average* salary of a psychologist or psychotherapist in Russia is since there are no official statistics, especially in the private sector. There is also no official evidence of gender differences in pay. The general tendencies are the following. In 2003 the Russian newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* published the rating of the five most 'desirable' professions where psychology was in the 4th place and the average

monthly wage was between £50-390 (Zadolina 2003). In 2007, the statistics from leading Moscow recruitment agencies showed that the rating of the psychology profession had gone up with a slight drop in popularity in the late 1990s. The most demanded branches were psychological counselling (average monthly salary: £200-1250) and forensic psychology (£450-750). The areas in less demand but higher wages were expert psychology (£750-1250); marketing psychology (£1250-2500); psychological diagnosing (£500-750) (Taranov 2007: n.p.).⁶⁶ Most of these figures are above the average national wage.⁶⁷ However, the wages of psychiatrists, psychotherapists and psychologists who work in state hospital systems and counsellors who work in the public education system (most of them women) are typically lower and can start from as low as RUB3700 (£75) a month with the average wage of RUB8092 (£162) in the medical sector in 2006.⁶⁸ This would imply that more professionals are potentially attracted to working in the private sector and in counselling.

An inquiry on Google about the price of individual consultations with a psychologist in Russia indicated a minimum price of RUB1000 (£25) and the higher threshold was hard to establish but some prices went as high as RUB6000 (£120) and more. In the case of my interviewees, the prices they charged per sessions⁶⁹ varied and were between RUB1000-3600 (£25-90) in Moscow and between RUB700-1500 (£17-38) in Vladivostok (see Chapter 2 for more details).

Currently, a wide array of therapies is available in the counselling services market in Russia, e.g. person-centred therapy, psychoanalysis, family systems therapies, Gestalt, Erickson's hypnosis, transpersonal psychology, NLP etc. (see Balachova et al. 2001; Cote 1998; Havenaar et al. 1998; Manichev and Mileskina 2006). An interesting specificity of the Russian situation is that despite the development of counselling, Russian people are still attracted to folk medicine, fortune tellers, white magic etc. (Balachova et al. 2001; see also Lindquist 2002). In the 1990s when counselling started to emerge in Russia there were no regulations of psychotherapeutic practice. In the chaos of the transition period anything from hypnotists to black and white magic performed by various frauds, fortune tellers, psychics and magicians were offered to people under the name of psychological counselling (Anon. 2007). In 1996 the Ministry of Public Health introduced a decree on the

⁶⁶ This information, however, is not fully representative because it mainly applies to Moscow where the average standard of living and wages are higher than in most regions.

⁶⁷ See footnote 6.

⁶⁸ Federal Service of State Statistics. 2007. Srednemesyachnaya Nominal'naya Nachislennaya Zarabotnaya Plata po Vidam Ekonomicheskoi Deyatel'nosti. (Average Nominal Monthly Salary in Various Spheres of Economic Activity). Available at <http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/2007/b07_11/07-07.htm>. Accessed 3 November 2007.

⁶⁹ The prices in organisational psychology (teambuilding, corporate spirit and sales and other kinds of training) are usually higher e.g. from £50 to £450 for each person in the workshop (Anon. 2006).

Regulation and Application of Methods of Psychological and Psychotherapeutic Influence.⁷⁰ The decree stated that psychotherapeutic methods prohibited by the Ministry of Public Health and Medical Industry (such as occult, supernatural and mystic methods, methods of a religious nature and suchlike) could not be used for the treatment of clients in certified institutions. However, there are still different private firms and quasi-psychologists who offer unlicensed types of treatment or training (Balachova et al. 2001). This situation, as I show in Chapters 3 and 4, has specific implications for the development of the psychological services market.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have discussed the historical background of the development of mental health services in Russia and the implications it has for psychological counselling. The development of psychology, psychiatry and psychotherapy in the Soviet Union was closely intertwined with Soviet ideology and this affected the development of counselling in various ways. For instance, it resulted in fear of using psychological services among the general public. The dominance of the Soviet ideology determined the theoretical development of psychology and resulted in the scarcity and under-development of psychotherapeutic schools in Russia. The fact that psychotherapy was mainly a domain of medicine still causes problems with sharing the jurisdiction and titles in the sphere of mental health services. The theoretical nature of higher psychological education in Russia also slows down the development of practical psychology. These issues are exacerbated by the under-development of legislation regarding psychology (see Chapters 4 and 6). Nonetheless, since the 1990s the profession has rapidly developed. There is much more publicity around psychological issues, and there has been a dramatic growth in the number of specialists in the field and in the supply of psychological services. Thus, psychological counselling is currently undergoing a rather complex process of development, which I shall continue to unpack in the following chapters. However, before I proceed, I shall explain my methodological choices and the process of fieldwork and analysis in the next chapter.

⁷⁰ Ministry of Public Health and Medical Industry of the Russian Federation, Decree № 245 On Regulation and Application of Methods of Psychological and Psychotherapeutic Influence. 13.06.1996. Available at <http://www.vcom.ru/cgi-bin/db/zakdoc?_reg_number=%C29603093>. Accessed 30 October 2007.

Chapter 2: Methodology

In this thesis I was committed to adopting a feminist approach to carrying out my research. However, as many scholars argue it is difficult to define straightforwardly what a feminist research method is (Letherby 2003; Harding 1987; Maynard 1994). Maynard (1994) suggests that it is possible to speak of specific distinctive features of feminist research practices, which are distinguished by the sorts of questions asked, the purpose of the work and the positionality of the researcher. For instance, feminist inquiry situates gender at the centre of its research, seeks to reveal women's lives and experiences, aims to promote social change and exercises reflexivity throughout the research process (DeVault 1996; Fonow and Cook 2005; Gustafson 2000; Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2007: 117). Thus, Kelly et al. (1992: 150) argue that 'what makes research feminist is less the method used, and more how it is used and what it is used for'.

Methodological practices tend to be informed by and closely intertwined with the ontological and epistemological stance(s) which researchers adopt (Maynard 1994). Stanley and Wise (1990: 39) underscore that '*all* knowledge, necessarily, results from the conditions of its production, is contextually located, and irrevocably bears the marks of its origins in the minds and intellectual practices of those lay and professional theorists and researchers who give voice to it' (italics as in original). Explicating the 'relations between the process and the product of research' (Letherby 2003: 5) through contextualising and reflecting on the positions of the researcher and participants in the study is an important part of (feminist) methodology (Reinharz and Chase 2003). Hence, in this chapter, I present a 'description, explanation, and justification of techniques used' and the ways in which they are used (Fonow and Cook 2005: 2213).

First I outline some theoretical considerations and explain the choice of method. I then describe my ethical considerations, sample and sampling strategies. This is followed by a discussion of my positionality and insider/outsider issues in the research process. Last, but not least, I focus on the process of transcribing, translating and analysing the data and conclude with a discussion of the importance of reflexivity in research.

Choosing the Method

Mason (2002b: 59) points out that 'how we look (the epistemology and methods we use) shapes what we can see'. In other words, different methods produce different data and thus

the choices of methods are made within the context of the researcher's background and the research questions. In this section, I explain the rationale for choosing semi-structured interviews as a primary method to investigate on women counsellors and the feminisation of psychology in Russia.

As I have pointed out in the Introduction, research on women's position in the labour market in Russia in general and on women in counselling/psychotherapy in particular has predominantly focused on the macroeconomic level. This has tended to be explored using statistical data derived from large polls, surveys or/and governmental databases (e.g. Gerber and Mayorova 2006; Ivannikov 2006; Manichev and Milesznika 2006; Rzhantsina 2000; Shelyag 2007). Quantitative studies have great significance in exposing the scale of a problem and its changes over time (Maynard 1994; Reinhartz 1992). As Gerson and Horowitz (2002: 201) argue 'macro-social trends [elicited from large-scale research] provide the starting point for formulating a research problem'. Therefore I have no intention to dismiss the importance of these quantitative studies of Russian psychology because they indeed expose certain vital issues in the field of psychology in Russia (e.g. the drawbacks of the system of psychological education, issues around the popularisation of counselling, etc.). 'However, the empirical puzzles they [quantitative studies] raise, can be resolved only by examining micro-social processes as they unfold in the lives of individuals' (Gerson and Horowitz 2002: 201). As Carnaghan (2001) states quantitative research methods do not always allow access to the 'complexity and nuances' present in people's thinking. 'Counting aspects of the research, though useful, tells only a small part of the story, and not always the most interesting' part (Rubin and Rubin 2005: 24). Thus, considering that the goal in this project is 'to look at the "meanings" individuals attribute to their given social situation' (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2007: 119) and examine the ways in which they interact and negotiate various practices in their work quantitative methods (e.g. survey or questionnaires) did not promise to yield appropriate results.

Large-scale quantitative studies have also been criticised by feminist scholarship for being based on the positivist 'male-centred' paradigm and missing out women's experiences (see Reinhartz and Chase 2003; Stanley and Wise 1990). Reinhartz (1992: 18) suggests that 'the abundance of statistics and generalisations about "work and its discontents" gives us little real understanding of how women lead their daily work lives, experience their jobs, or perceive work-related issues'. Some scholars, however, argue that 'there is no inherent contradiction in feminist researchers doing quantitative research' (Neal 1995: 521) as long as it adheres to feminist methodological principles (Kelly et al. 1992). But the research done on psychological counselling in Russia does not employ any

feminist approach. In fact, it does not engage in a discussion of gender issues at all. In my project I am interested in exploring women's experiences, understanding how *women* make sense of being a professional in a feminised field and how they see their career and their position. Thus, in this context interviewing represents my preferred strategy, since it allows women to talk about what they find important (Barnes 1992), express their complex and/or contradictory opinions (Carnaghan 2001), and clarify and explain their answers and positions on the issues in question (Williams and Heikes 1993).

Interviewing has long been used in feminist research in order to access hidden knowledge and women's individual experiences (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2007: 118; Maynard 1994). Moreover, as Stanley and Wise (1990: 43) argue, "'individuals" do not exist except as socially located beings; thus social structures and categories can be "recovered" by analysing the accounts of particular people in particular circumstances'. Therefore 'interviews provide the opportunity to examine how large-scale social transformations are experienced, interpreted, and ultimately shaped by the responses of strategic social actors' (Stanley and Wise 1990: 43; Gerson and Horowitz 2002). For instance, as Marshall and Rossman (2006: 105) argue, interviewing elites⁷¹/professionals is advantageous because it 'can provide an overall view of an organization or its relationship to other organizations' although from a limited perspective. Mullings (1999) writes that interviewing professionals provides a better understanding of the structures and processes in organizations and makes it possible to investigate the rationale behind the decision-making practices of individuals. A study of elite politicians in Russia revealed that interviewing professionals enabled an explanation of the 'inner social world' and internal hierarchies and values within the field which could not be accessed in the same way through large-scale survey methods (White et al. 1996). In the same vein, interviewing professional psychologists can elicit information about the ways in which they view their professional settings and structures through the lens of their individual experiences.

My choice of semi-structured interviews was also purposeful. As Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2007: 122) maintain, semi-structured interviews are 'particularly helpful when the feminist researcher wants to focus on a particular area of the individual's life'. Although semi-structured interviews have an agenda, they still allow the possibility to be flexible about the questions and offer an opportunity to pursue the topics which are of importance to the respondents. This in turn, makes it possible to later follow up or draw out

⁷¹ There are various conceptualisations of what constitutes an 'elite' interview, for example, people who influence important decisions, possess elite knowledge, represent political authorities etc. (Smith, K. 2006: 645). Although in line with Smith I am wary of using this label I still perceive my interviews as (at least partially) 'elite' because most of my participants were well-established experts influential or/and quite famous figures in their field, some of them were directors of large psychological agencies or heads of faculties in universities, so in a way they were the 'elite' in their field.

explanations and hypotheses based on the views and opinions of the respondents (Barnes 1992). Indeed, during the process of interviewing and analysis, I made an effort to focus on the particular “‘subjective’ understanding an individual brings to a given situation or set of circumstances’ (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2007: 118). Hence using a specific interview guide allows for a balance between covering specific topics and letting my participants focus on the issues they find important (see Reinharz 1992).

There is yet another point which I need to emphasize and that concerns conducting interviews in Russia. Silverman (1997: 19) suggests that (western) society is now an ‘interview society’. I would argue that this is not a fully accurate statement for Russia. Indeed, liberation and relative freedom of speech after the 1990s made interviewing blossom as a source of people’s opinion on television and in the press (Carnaghan 2001) and as I show later in this chapter many of my participants had experience of being interviewed. However, as a research technique, interviewing is just finding its way into academic space. In the Anglophone (feminist) literature there is an extensive tradition of theorising the interview method with numerous critiques and meta-critiques on the way it is used (e.g. DeVault 1990; Maynard and Purvis 1994; Oakley 1981; Reinharz 1992). In Russia interviewing as a method of social research only started to be discussed in the sociological literature after the 1990s and still has less ‘legitimacy’ compared with other mainstream sociological methods such as polling, surveys and so on (Belanovskiy 1991; Iarskaia-Smirnova and Romanov 2002). As Laczik (2006) points out, it is still mostly considered to be non-scientific. Harden (2001) also points out that there is little familiarity with this kind of research method in Russia. Because of such attitudes I anticipated that doing my interviews might entail certain challenges, for instance sampling problems or getting people to talk, and that such attitudes to the interview method could also influence the interviewees’ perceptions of me as a bona fide and credible researcher (I come back to the discussion of these points further on in this chapter).

However, in spite of these concerns, I decided in favour of interviewing first of all, because as I discussed earlier, this method promised to elicit information that could not be obtained through other means of research. The other reason for choosing this method was that, although there are studies on women in the Russian labour market which use interviews as a source of data (e.g. Ashwin 2000b; 2006c; Posadskaya 1994b), they contain virtually no mention or analysis of any methodological and/or practical concerns about the process of research. Thus using this method gave me the chance to investigate and demonstrate various specificities of interviewing in Russia, such as for example sampling or scheduling, which I discuss later in this chapter. So, having weighed all the advantages and disadvantages I made my decision to employ semi-structured interviews as

my research method which, I have to say, turned out to be a very exciting, challenging and rewarding experience. And, indeed, the stories told by my participants gave me much richer data than questionnaires used in previously conducted research (e.g. Shelyag 2007; Manichev and Mileshkina 2006; Mileshkina 2007).

Research Ethics

This thesis was informed by the York University code of good practice⁷² for research, the BSA ethical guidelines⁷³ and, importantly, by the feminist research literature which is particularly sensitive to the questions of power relations in research and the importance of reflexivity (e.g. Kelly et al. 1994; Kirsch 1999; Mauthner et al. 2002, etc.). The key ethical issues in this project were 1) working with human subjects and gaining their informed consent, 2) maintaining the anonymity of my participants and the confidentiality of the data obtained, 3) guarding my safety during the research process, and 4) representing the data in a way that does not misrepresent the information given by the participants.

Informed consent was obtained directly from the participants. By informed consent I mean that my participants understood what research was about and how the data collected was going to be used. In my letter of invitation⁷⁴ or in the conversation (in case of snowball recruitment) I had with them prior to the actual interviews, I informed the prospective participants about myself, and the aims and procedures of my research. When I met my participants I explained that they could withdraw at any time, that they could refuse to answer questions, that they could request to read the transcripts, that they are guaranteed anonymity and that their personal information will be kept confidential. I also explained that the data would be used in my thesis and publications (given their permission) arising from it and that I would represent the data as accurately as possible. All of the above points were also summarised in the consent form⁷⁵ that all my participants signed, thereby giving me permission to use the data in the ways agreed (I come back to the discussion of the use of consent forms later in this chapter).

Overall, my participants were not particularly vulnerable. All of them were grown-ups, in good health, most of them were older than I, and the majority were well-established specialists in the field. This, as I discuss in more detail later in this chapter, raised some

⁷² The York University code of good practice for research. Available at <<http://www.york.ac.uk/staff/research/policies/research-code/#4>>. Accessed 23 May 2010.

⁷³ Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association (2002). Available at <<http://www.britisoc.co.uk/equality/Statement+Ethical+Practice.htm>>. Accessed 23 May 2010.

⁷⁴ See Appendix II for the letter of invitation used.

⁷⁵ For a sample of the consent form see Appendix V.

interesting questions about the balance of power between researcher and participants in the process of fieldwork. As I show further in this chapter, I tried my best to ensure that my participants felt comfortable during the interview, that I respected their boundaries, opinions and well-being, and that I did not abuse their help or hospitality.

I kept my research participants' identities anonymous. Personal information was also kept confidential. For example, I did not mention the names of the universities or centres where my interviewees worked and the bibliographical information which I collected was used in a general manner, omitting as much as possible any details that could identify the participants. Although minimal, there may be a possibility that insiders (especially in the smaller city of Vladivostok) might recognise some of their colleagues in the quotes that I cited. However, in the case of my research this is not highly problematic since I do not engage with any sensitive or intimate issues. Most of the accounts are professional or personal opinions and, even if recognised, do not represent a threat to or entail any harmful ramifications for the person in question.

Guarding my safety was one of the concerns (especially while conducting interviews in Moscow, since Vladivostok is my hometown and is more familiar). Since I did not have a particular place to conduct the interviews in Moscow, I had to use either public spaces or my participants' space (i.e. their workplace or home). However, because most of my participants were women I did not perceive the security risks to be very high. As I explain later in this chapter, my snowball sampling technique meant that I recruited all of my male participants (and some females) through known others which and that also minimised the personal safety concerns. Finally, before every interview I let my friends and/or relatives know where I was going and left them contact details of the person I was going to see.

Finally, representing the data in an accurate way was, of course, my crucial responsibility as a researcher. (Re)presenting data in a considerate way has long been a concern of (feminist) social research (Edwards and Ribbens 1998; Kirsch 1999; Mauthner et al. 2002; Hertz 1995). At the end of this chapter I discuss the process of transcribing, translating and analysing my data and explain that there were at least three ways in which I tried to ensure the fairness of my (re)presentation of the data: I translated the scripts as accurately as possible and did my best to communicate my interviewees' ideas as precisely as possible; I also informed my participants that I would send them a summary of my research findings. Finally, throughout my research and in this thesis I thus tried to exercise a high degree of reflexivity on my personal and theoretical position.

My Field and Participants

Due to the time constraints involved in writing a PhD and other obvious reasons (such as the geographical size of Russia) it was impossible for me to interview people throughout the country. Instead, I held the interviews in two cities in Russia: in Moscow between 1 April 2008 and 15 May 2008 and in Vladivostok from 17 May 2008 until 30 July 2008 (see Figure 1).

Figure 2. Map of the Russian Federation.



Source: <<http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/asia/outline/ruout.htm>>.

Accessed on 14 December 2009.

Moscow is the capital of Russia and is also the economic, political and financial centre of the country. According to the Moscow's government webpage,⁷⁶ the population of Moscow is 10, 470 million⁷⁷ people. Its main industries are engineering, metalwork, light industries, petrochemical industry etc. There are 60 state universities in Moscow, including one of the oldest, largest and most prestigious - Lomonosov Moscow State University. The average monthly salary in Moscow is RUB35737 (£525) (Anon. 2008).

⁷⁶ The official website of Moscow's government. <<http://mos.ru/wps/portal/>>. Accessed 23 September 2008.

⁷⁷ This is the official information, i.e. excluding people who do not have an address registration, illegal migrants, homeless people etc. This number also excludes the population of the Moscow region (about 6,7 million people) which is a separate administrative entity, but geographically is an extension of Moscow city, with a high number of its population working in Moscow.

The estimated monthly cost of living in Moscow is RUB7518 (£149).⁷⁸ In 2008 Moscow was voted 'the most expensive city' according to the Cost of Living Survey.⁷⁹

Vladivostok is Russia's largest city in the Far East. It is the end/start port of the trans-Siberian railroad. According to the official website of Vladivostok Council,⁸⁰ Vladivostok's population in 2005 was 610,200 people. The main industries are shipping, fishing, timber and metal export. There are 11 state universities in the city, including the Far Eastern National University – the oldest and the biggest university in the Far East of Russia. The average monthly salary is RUB 15700 (£320). The estimated cost of living in Vladivostok in 2008 was RUB6256 (£128).⁸¹

I chose these two cities because they are very different geographically, economically and financially. One is the capital, the other is a provincial city. As is clear from the descriptions, these two cities vary economically, in their educational opportunities, their population size, and in many other respects which produce significant differences in the process of the formation and development of the counselling profession in each setting. As I show in the following chapters, these differences shape the structure of the education opportunities and clientele pool, influence counsellors' pricing policy, affect the establishment of professional organizations etc.

Overall, I interviewed 26 practising psychologists, i.e. a total of 23 women and 3 men.⁸² The distribution is uneven because initially I planned to interview only women, but in the course of my fieldwork I thought it would be useful to talk to at least some men. As I have discussed in the Introduction and as will become clear later in this thesis most psychological counsellors in Russia are women. Thus, the gender distribution in my sample in a way reflects the ratio of men and women that exists in this profession. The reason I became interested in interviewing men was because the women I interviewed talked about their male colleagues and why the latter did not fancy this profession, so I

⁷⁸ Officially the estimated cost of living for the able-bodied population for 2008 established by the Moscow Government (Decree № 392-III On the Estimated Cost of Living, 13.05.2008. Available at <<http://base.consultant.ru/cons/cgi/online.cgi?req=doc;base=MLAW;n=91554>>. Accessed 17 October 2008). According to the Federal Law On the Minimum Cost of Living in the Russian Federation the cost of living includes a basic consumer goods basket and utilities (Decree №134-Φ3, 24.10.1997. Available at <<http://base.garant.ru/172780.htm>>. Accessed 17 October 2008). Usually this amount does not correspond to the real cost of living which is estimated as at least 2,5 times higher than the official one by independent experts (Kudrikova 2008).

⁷⁹ Mercer Management Consulting Cost of Living Survey. Available at <<http://www.mercer.com/summary.htm?idContent=1095320&originUrl=/home.jhtml>>. Accessed 23 September 2008.

⁸⁰ The official website of Vladivostok City Council <<http://www.vlc.ru/>>. Accessed 23 September 2008.

⁸¹ This figure is estimated by the Far Eastern Regional Government in 2007. Available at <<http://novostivl.ru/msg/?id=4357&rubric=4&p=1>>. Accessed 17 October 2008. In reality the cost of living is at least 2 times higher.

⁸² For mini biographies of the interviewees see Appendix I.

decided to follow this up first hand. All the interviewees were white, Russian, middle-class⁸³ and were aged between 28 and 64, with an average age of 42 (see Table 1).

Table 1. Total number of interviewees by location and age group

City	Number of participants (by age group)			
	28-35	36-45	46-55	56-64
Moscow	5	8 (7 female and 1 male)	2 (1 female and 1 male)	1
Vladivostok	0	4 (3 female and 1 male)	4	1

This age distribution means that all my interviewees were born before 1989 and 21 of them (apart from five people in Moscow) received their first university education before 1989. Fourteen were married, seven were divorced, three were single and two had partners but were not married. The majority (21) had one or two children. Four participants had children aged six and under, all the rest had children aged between 14 and 39 years old.

All the participants were university graduates. For 17 interviewees psychology was their second higher education degree; for three, it was their third university degree. Only six people had psychology as their first and only university degree and all of these interviewees were interviewed in Moscow (see Table 2).

Table 2. Interviewees by education and degree (= n)

City	Psychology degree			Type of degree	
	As 1 st university degree	As 2 nd university degree	As 3 rd university degree	Specialist ⁸⁴	Candidate of Science ⁸⁵
Moscow	6	9	2	10	7
Vladivostok	0	8	1	4	5
Total	6	17	3	14	12

⁸³ It is difficult to define what ‘middle class’ in Russia is. For example, one of the grounds on which Balzer (1996: 3) identifies middle-class affiliation in Russia is the nature of a profession: the middle class consists of highly educated people who do mostly intellectual, highly-skilled, non-manual work (he calls them ‘professional intelligentsia’). According to this description my interviewees belong to the middle class: all of them had a university education and those who worked before coming into counselling had white-collar occupations. Moreover, all of my interviewees seemed to have at least an average or above average (family) income and most of them seemed to have a middle-class social background (for example educated parents).

⁸⁴ Standard 5-year university degree (see Chapter 1).

⁸⁵ A post graduate degree, roughly an equivalent of a PhD degree (Karandashev 2006). See Chapter 1 for more detail on the Russian system of higher education.

The main reason for this lies in the sampling procedure. In Moscow I obtained contact details of the participants through a list available on a professional website. Their personal details were available on their profiles and therefore I made sure that I contacted people from various age groups. However, in Vladivostok I used snowball sampling since there were no registers or websites available, and I ended up having no interviewees aged between 28 and 35. This means that all the participants in Vladivostok obtained their first university degree before 1989 and since the first psychology department in Vladivostok was opened only in 1991 none of them could have studied psychology for their first degree (I discuss sampling in more detail later in this chapter).

The interviewees' first degree varied and was anything from chemistry to law and theatre directing (see Table 3).

Table 3. Interviewees by the subject of their first degree (= n)

	Natural sciences	Social sciences	Life sciences/ medicine	Arts and Humanities	Applied sciences
Moscow	Chemistry: 3 Physics: 1 Mathematics: 1	Economics: 1		Philology: 1 Florist: 1 Theatre director: 1	Engineering: 1 Education: 2 Law: 1
Vladivostok	Physics: 1 Geology: 1	Economics: 2	Medicine: 2	Architecture: 1	Computer science: 1 Physical education: 1
Total number of people	7	2	2	4	6

The fact that people changed their professions so radically is not unexpected for Russia. After 1989 many industries collapsed and many jobs (such as engineering, science etc.) became low-paid and/or were no longer in demand. As Sabirianova (2002: 197) in her study of occupational mobility in Russia shows, 42% of her survey respondents changed their occupation during the period of 1991-1998.

The majority of counsellors indicated that they usually saw their clients in the office or in a centre although eight people said that they also conducted sessions in their homes. There was no clear difference between the cities in this respect. However, the cost of sessions (ranging from RUB700 (£15) to RUB3600 (£75)) differed between the cities with noticeably higher prices in Moscow (see Table 4).

Table 4. Interviewees by average session fee, number of sessions, percent of working time devoted to counselling and percent of monthly income earned through counselling

	Fees (RUB)	Average number of sessions per week	Percent of working time devoted to counselling (%)	Percent of monthly earning earned by counselling (%)
Moscow	1000-3600	3-18	30-100	30-100
Vladivostok	700-1500	3-20	25-65	20-60

The average number of sessions performed by the counsellors per week did not vary much between the two cities but the percent of total working time spent on individual counselling was higher in Moscow (see Table 4). None of my participants in Vladivostok indicated that they lived off counselling alone, while some Moscow-based interviewees did. This means that practitioners in Vladivostok did more extra work in addition to individual counselling than counsellors in Moscow. All of the participants had experience of private counselling practice ranging from 2,5 to over 20 years. There was no difference between the cities in terms of the average number of years of practice (ten years on average in both cities) because even though some of the interviewees in Moscow had done their psychology degree before 1989, they too started counselling practice after perestroika (1989-1991). Overall the diversity of the experiences of people in the sample was very valuable and enriched the data through exposing different aspects of professional practices and processes.

Research Participant Recruitment Process

Initially, I intended to use snowball sampling to access my interviewees. Researchers (Browne 2002; Faugier and Sargeant 1997) note that snowballing is a widespread technique for reaching ‘hidden populations’. One of the characteristics of the latter is that ‘no sampling frame exists, so the size and boundaries of the population are unknown’ (Heckathorn 1997: 174) which was exactly the case for my research. Although psychological counsellors have quite a high degree of ‘social visibility’ (Faugier and Sergant 1997), there is no official register of them in Russia. The websites of the various professional organizations usually did not contain a list of members or any contact details of registered psychologists; moreover, the information was rather outdated⁸⁶. Therefore, snowball sampling seemed like the best way to access my interviewees. However, due to

⁸⁶ For example, the information about the regional branches of the Russian Psychological Society displayed on their website was at least seven years out of date in 2008. Available at < <http://www.rpo.rsu.ru/>>. Accessed 14 January 2008.

the reasons that I describe in this section I ended up using two different methods (snowballing and e-mail) to contact my participants in Moscow and Vladivostok, both of which inevitably had their own specific effects on the research process.

Since there were only two counsellors in Moscow whom I knew I was concerned that I would not get enough participants through snowballing. Therefore I decided to try to contact people in another way. I decided to search the websites of psychological centres and individual psychologists on the internet. I also found a recently launched website⁸⁷ where psychologists and psychotherapists listed information about themselves and their contact details. This website was very helpful. Because the psychologists listed there had their credentials and work experience displayed, it was easy to identify those who fitted my general sampling criteria (they had to have psychological education and some experience of individual/group counselling). Moreover, looking through profiles allowed me to get some background information prior to an actual interview which proved to be valuable in establishing a rapport with my participants.

I sent out 94 individual e-mails with the description of my project and invitations to take part in it. I chose to send letters rather than make phone calls because usually the websites contained only the centre administrator's number or a general inquiries line and being aware of Russian cultural practices I knew that no one would even put me through to talk to a specialist unless I was a client. Moreover, in a letter I could provide relatively comprehensive information about my research to my prospective participants. Within two weeks I had eighteen responses with consent. Out of those eighteen, several dropped out later. Although they did not explicitly say 'no' when I called them, they complained about their lack of time and offered to call me back which they never did. I also had two hostile e-mails where people expressed how uninterested they were in my research. I did not take offence but I was surprised that people actually spent time writing a response rather than just ignoring my invitation. Thirteen others eagerly scheduled to meet me when I called them. Overall I interviewed seventeen people in Moscow: thirteen were recruited by e-mail, two by personal contacts and two through snowballing.⁸⁸

Sixsmith et al. (2003: 585) point out that in their study 'the lack of personal contact with researchers inhibited any willingness to continue participating, particularly when community members had very little experience of research'. In a related study, Rivera et al. (2002: 686) note that in their research on Russian elites 'the request made in person

⁸⁷ All Psychologists of Russia website. Available at <www.psychology-guide.ru>. Accessed 23 September 2008.

⁸⁸ When I decided to interview men I sent personal e-mails to 25 male counsellors listed on the professional website (psychology-guide) but no one replied so I had to ask my female interviewees if they could put me in contact with their colleagues.

increased the likelihood that the target respondent would agree to interview'. However, in my case I had no other option but to make my initial contact with Moscow participants via e-mail. The reason for this was that I could spend only a limited amount of time there⁸⁹ and I had to make sure that I had at least general consent from people to participate so I did not lose time searching for interviewees. My research experience showed that in a situation when contacting people face-to-face is not possible, trying to make the initial e-mail contact as personalised as possible helped to get a reasonable response rate. I sent e-mails to individual e-mail accounts and tried to make them personalised by addressing people by their name, which proved to be a good strategy. I found that the response rate differed radically depending on whether I sent e-mails directly to a person or to a centre's general e-mail address. In fact, I did not get *any* replies from any psychological centres that I contacted. One reason for this may be that centre administrators did not forward my message to staff. Another reason may be that people felt more obliged to answer personal e-mails rather than a general one. Thus, contacting people via e-mail can be a relatively successful approach if it is personalised.

There was yet another situation which demonstrated that making individual contacts played a crucial role in getting research participants. When in Moscow, I was invited to a psychological seminar by one of my interviewees where I was given ten minutes to talk about my research and recruit people. I left about thirty invitation leaflets with all the information and my contact details (e-mail and two phone numbers). During my presentation I was asked several questions and people seemed interested and when I checked the next day all the leaflets had gone and the centre administrator said that she even had to make extra photocopies. However, no one contacted me. Reluctance to take action in a group/non-personalised situation has long been a matter of discussion in social psychology (Latane and Rodin 1997). One of the suggested explanations is the diffusion of responsibility in a group; in other words, in a situation where several people are present and a certain action is required people rely on others to do what is needed and in the end no one does it (ibid: 437). This was probably the case in my situation. Thus, my experiences showed that face-to-face interaction with a *group* can be less effective than a distant but personalised contact with an *individual*.

There were, however, other issues with contacting people via e-mail. First, some information was outdated and I ended up with two people who had almost no experience of counselling. Second, judging by the tardiness of the responses not everyone checked their e-mails regularly. For example, I received an e-mail with consent for an interview in

⁸⁹ When in Moscow I stayed with a friend because it was too expensive to rent a flat or stay in a hotel. This partly restricted the time of my stay in Moscow: I was there for a month since staying longer felt very much like abusing my friend's hospitality.

Moscow in June 2008 while I sent out the invitations in March 2008. Finally, having/not having internet access was in itself a point of exclusion in sampling (Mann and Stewart 2003: 243). First of all, not all Moscow psychologists were listed on the professional website and not all of the listed ones had e-mail accounts. As for Vladivostok, there were also only five people from Vladivostok registered on the psychology-guide.ru website and none of these responded to my e-mails. Therefore in Vladivostok I had to stick to snowball sampling.

Since I had done my psychology degree in Vladivostok, I was familiar with the city's counselling community because it is not (or at least does not seem to be) very large. Six of my participants I knew from before as we had met at various workshops and training. They agreed to be interviewed and helped me find other people. Overall twelve people consented to be interviewed in Vladivostok, but I actually interviewed only nine, since three others who had agreed to meet me could not in the end find the time.

Although snowball sampling proved to be helpful in terms of gaining access to participants, it had certain implications for my sample. As Browne (2005) points out, one of the main problems of snowball sampling is that although it allows access to 'hidden populations' it also excludes certain groups. Since snowballing relies on participants the latter inevitably have their own idea of whom they should put in further contact with a researcher (Edwards et al. 1999). Therefore, people 'may be excluded for a multiplicity of reasons, such as not knowing a person well enough (if at all) or because of strained relations between [them]' (Browne 2005: 52). As I have pointed out in the previous section, in my case, such exclusions meant that in Vladivostok I missed out the category of younger counsellors aged 25-34. Most of my initial contacts were middle-aged, well-established professionals and they tended to put me in contact with their colleagues who had similar characteristics. And although in our interviews psychologists talked about the development of young people's careers I still missed the first-hand accounts of those experiences.

In spite of certain drawbacks, the snowball technique was advantageous in terms of the speed of getting participants. Usually, those with whom I was put in contact agreed to be interviewed right away. Snowballing also minimised safety concerns. As Lee-Treweek and Linkogle (2000) point out visiting people's workplaces, homes and communities can contain potential threat, which, according to Keynon and Hawker (1999) is especially prominent when women interview men. However, because both the men whom I interviewed in Moscow were suggested by two female interviewees with whom I was acquainted beforehand, I was not worried when I went to meet them. Therefore snowball sampling in my case to a great extent minimised a potential security problem.

Once I was in contact with people and got their general consent to conduct an interview another challenge was to schedule our meetings. A peculiar issue about accessing research participants in Russia is that Russians have, as Rivera et al. (2002: 682) put it, ‘an aversion to advanced scheduling’. Being Russian, I know that this is largely true and is due to the fact that in Russia people usually live very much ‘for the day’. I nevertheless tried to schedule interviews while I was still in the UK, but the most common answer was: ‘I’ll definitely do it, but I don’t know what my schedule is, so call me when you are in Moscow and we’ll find time to meet’. So I had to ring people when I arrived in Moscow and, quite predictably, people wanted to meet as soon as possible (the longest planning was ten days ahead). Phrases like: ‘Let’s meet...mmm...tomorrow!’ or invitations to come on the same day when I called were very common. Several times I had two interviews in one day and on two occasions I had only an hour’s break between the interviews so the challenge was to get from one interview location to the other on time.⁹⁰ But if there was a possibility that I could make it, I agreed to schedule the interview, because I was anxious that either people would not be able to meet at other times or that the continuous planning and re-planning process would lose their interest in the research. In Vladivostok, for instance, I had to re-schedule several interviews a number of times because people could not make it due to some last-minute arrangements and I could feel that after I had called them for the third or fourth time their eagerness to meet me faded away. In Moscow, I lost two interviewees due to this problem.

Re-scheduling, however, did not take place just because people did not want to meet me. It was mainly because my participants were extremely busy, doing several jobs and working on a short-term schedule. Moreover, they all had a private practice (which meant they got paid by the hour). Therefore, they needed to be responsive to clients’ demands and this included being flexible with their time. For example, one of my interviewees made the following comment about the session scheduling practice:

Clients usually want to make an appointment at once! Immediately. As soon as possible. Literally, for today and better in the following 2-3 hours! They just call and want to schedule right away... Often some say: ‘OK, I want it either now or I’ll find another psychologist!’ (MF9)

⁹⁰ One of the most daunting things during my research process was transportation. It was no problem in Vladivostok where I had a car but it was really tiring in Moscow. The distances are huge and sometimes when I had two interviews a day I could spend about 4-5 hours on public transport.

Having to be flexible with one's schedule meant that my interview was (understandably) not the highest priority on my participants' to-do list and, of course, I could not demand it. However, all of the interviewees were really helpful and were genuinely sorry if they had to re-schedule or could not make it.

To sum up, I recruited my participants through a combination of snowball sampling and via e-mail. Each strategy had both advantages and limitations; however, each was chosen according to the particular context in order to yield the best results. The outcome of the sampling process was the consent of 26 participants. In the following section I explain how the interviews were conducted and outline the factors that shaped the interview procedure.

Interviewing in Russia

Most of my interviews (13 out of 26) took place in the interviewees' offices. Seven interviews were conducted in the participants' homes and six in various cafés. When I called people to schedule a meeting they usually told me where they wanted to meet. As a rule those who had a permanent office in a psychological centre preferred to meet there. Those who saw clients at home or had to pay hourly rent for their office preferred to meet at home or in a café. When I met people in their offices or apartments, I always brought a box of chocolates with me because in Russia it is considered impolite to go empty-handed (especially to someone's home). It was also a token of gratitude for the time they devoted to our interview. When I met people in cafés, I usually paid for their coffee as a thank-you gesture. As a rule, if I came to someone's home or office I was offered tea and coffee which is a common ritual of hospitality in Russia. Sometimes I accepted the offer and a couple of times I did not. In the latter cases I felt like there was more uneasiness at the start of the conversation, because then the interviewees perceived it as a very formal event, so from then on I tended to say 'yes' to tea and coffee.

Interviews usually lasted about an hour. Some people did not mind going beyond this time, but I felt that I should observe the time limit because I was taking up their working time. After all, most of my interviewees saw me during their working hours and an hour of their time would normally cost their clients from £20 to £70. The time-management was more relaxed in cases when the interviews took place in people's homes or when I interviewed people whom I already knew. Often in these situations people did not seem to be in a hurry and wanted to chat before or after the interview. But even in those cases I was cautious not to abuse their hospitality.

Before I started interviewing I usually spent some time talking about my research and my background because although I had sent the invitation letter with a description of my work beforehand it still felt like reiterating this information face-to-face was a good ice-breaker and eased the way into a further conversation. Another thing that seemed to put people at ease was my mentioning the phrase ‘*unstructured* interview’. It seemed that this made the participants perceive the interview as a more informal procedure. In Vladivostok the introductory conversations were usually a bit longer because I contacted people through snowballing and often I had only a few minutes on the phone to quickly explain what the project was about so I needed more time to explain the interview procedure and my research.

Occasionally interviews were interrupted by phone calls or by visitors. Usually interviewees apologized for interrupting the conversation and some would switch off their mobiles, some would not. I did not find this too disruptive; in fact, sometimes these unintentional pauses allowed me to focus and think about my next question. Sometimes, it seemed that my participants lost the thread of their thought after a phone conversation, but I still felt that I could not tell them not pick up the phone as they were already doing me a favour.

Following the ethics of research I always reminded my participants that they were free not to answer a question if they did not feel like it, or stop the conversation or ask me questions at any time. I also once again asked their permission to use the recorder (I had previously mentioned recording in the invitation letter). However, none of my interviewees seemed to have problems with this. I reminded my participants that the interviews were confidential and that their names were not going to be used in the thesis. Interestingly, many said that they did not care or did not mind if I used their real name. Furthermore none of my interviewees (except one) asked anything about what I was going to do with the recordings and transcripts. When I nonetheless explained it at the end of the conversation most of them did not seem to show much interest. My sense is that this was because many were not familiar with qualitative interviewing and they did not have any negative experiences with it. Moreover, since I mentioned that my research would be published in the UK maybe my participants did not care that much about confidentiality. I, nevertheless, kept all my interviewees’ identities anonymous as required by research ethics.

One thing that some of my interviewees did ask was whether my research would have practical benefit or influence on the state of psychology in Russia. This question, I thought, arose from a widely accepted premise of doing social research in Russia: it should

entail some real-life implications and/or benefits.⁹¹ The interest in the results of the interviews and overall project was much higher in Moscow than in Vladivostok, which I think partly relates to the issue of interviewing people in the same/different network. Platt (1981: 77) writes that in the situation of interviewing friends or people in the same community she encountered the situation where ‘rumours circulate’ about ‘what interviews were like’ and ‘people tried to find out what others had told’ the researcher. Most of the people whom I interviewed in Vladivostok knew each other to some extent or had heard of each other. They were members of a rather small community (as in the Platt’s case) and, of course, snowball sampling had been used, which necessarily implies individuals will know at least one other individual in the sample. But in spite of this fact they were not really interested in each other’s accounts. I cannot say whether they talked about the interviews among themselves, but when I met them no one asked me anything about what other people had told me. Similarly they were not too interested in the results of the overall research. In contrast, interviewees in Moscow, who did not know each other (with a few exceptions), kept asking me about other people’s answers and opinions and when the overall results would be ready. My sense is that because in Vladivostok the psychological community is not very large and most of my interviewees meet each other from time to time in workshops and training, they have an opportunity to exchange opinions on some of the professional matters that we were discussing. In contrast, in Moscow people were more interested in what their colleagues had told me since the professional community is very large and scattered and because there may be no other way to get hold of this information (as I show in Chapter 6 there was little space for professional discussions because professional associations did not work properly).

As I have pointed out previously in this chapter, before starting my fieldwork I anticipated that I might experience difficulties carrying out interviews in Russia since people are not familiar with this type of sociological research (Rivera et al. 2002; Harden 2001). However, to my great relief, I had little problem getting people to talk. Those who agreed to participate showed a lot of interest in my topic and were willing to share their opinion. I think what helped me considerably was that at least half of my participants had already had experience of being on TV and radio programs and being interviewed by various journals and newspapers, so what Silverman (1997) calls an ‘interview society’ is also evolving in Russia. However, some people had no experience of being interviewed at all and all but one had no experience of taking part in qualitative research. Lack of interview experience, however, did not cause problems in getting people to talk.

⁹¹ In Russian social sciences by convention are supposed to have a section on the ‘practical importance and implications’ of the research in the dissertation, unless it is purely theoretical (Volkov, Y. 2001).

Sometimes at the start of the interview I had to encourage people to elaborate on certain issues by constant nodding and saying things like ‘yes’, ‘go on’, ‘this is very interesting’ etc. Most of the interviewees seemed quite comfortable talking about themselves.

In most instances, I felt I managed to establish a good rapport which was also evident from the fact that often at the end of the interview it was difficult for people to stop talking: when I tried to finish, they suddenly burst into another ten-minute discussion on various matters. I think because many people had never thought about certain issues (for example, why counselling is a female dominated profession) it took them some time to consider their opinion on the topic and occasionally by the time they did the interview was over. Several times when I was almost at the door saying good-bye people started discussing issues raised in the interview. This was unfortunate as I did, not have my recorder on and they usually said interesting things. But on the other hand, these last-minute conversations were reassuring insofar as they suggested that people had become engaged with the issues raised in the interviews.

At the end of each interview I distributed short questionnaires⁹² to collect demographic data. Sometimes participants filled out the questionnaires by themselves. Sometimes I felt that I should do it myself. Usually this was when we were running out of time or when, for example, the person behaved rather authoritatively and I felt that s/he would not want to ‘condescend’ to filling out questionnaires. The latter was particularly the case when I was dealing with people who are eminent in the profession or who think of themselves as such.

I also asked my participants to sign consent forms. Before starting my research I was concerned whether I would be able to get people to sign these forms. There is a discussion in the literature about the limits of consent forms arguing, for example, that obtaining a signature from participants is too burdensome and often complicated (Seidman 1991; Singer 1980). Some researchers (e.g. Liu 2006) working in non-Western contexts chose not to use consent forms at all in order not to frighten off participants. However, I decided to try it and surprisingly I did not have any problems with it. On the contrary, several times it even helped me to gain more trust and credibility. For example one of my interviewees seemed undecided about whether she wanted to participate (later it turned out that she had already had a bad experience giving an interview to a newspaper). So showing her the consent form before the interview gave me more credibility in her eyes and she agreed to talk. In several instances people praised the idea of having such forms as a part of one’s research. One even asked me for a spare copy because she said that she wanted to use it when she wrote her own dissertation. I think that signing this form was also

⁹² For a sample of the questionnaire see Appendix III.

perceived as something ‘western’ (as it is not part of research in Russian academia) and therefore people did not object that much. The smooth procedure with the consent forms could also be due to the characteristics of my sample: all my participants were highly educated professionals who were to a certain extent familiar with research processes.

However, I think that my participants’ understanding of what sociological research should be like was also a part of the interview process. For example, I think that the ideas about objectivity and standardisation which dominate the scholarly milieu in Russia⁹³ resulted in my interviewees partly doubting the value of their personal experiences and ignoring personal life details. For instance, people often asked, ‘Is anything I have said of interest to you at all?’ (VF2); or, ‘I’ve warned you that I have a particular view on everything so I may spoil your results’ (MF10). I had to reassure my interviewees that everything they said was of great value, that I was not looking for ‘objective’ or generalised answers and that it was interesting for me to learn about their different personal and professional backgrounds. However, my interviewees did not tend to focus on personal life details. Many people tried to avoid mentioning their family, or children and tried to minimise the amount of personal information given even though throughout the interview it was obvious that their personal circumstances played a great role in the development of these women’s professional careers (see Chapter 3). For example one of the interviewees mentioned that she worked both in Moscow and St. Petersburg and when I asked for the reason she said, ‘Yes, well, but it’s just due to my personal circumstances’ (MF2). I paused. But she did not go into further details or explanations.

The fact that people focused on what they thought were ‘professional matters’ may also have been a result of the focus of my project on work. My interview questions were about work, career and profession. My participants were qualified experts in that field. Moreover, in most cases I saw my interviewees in their workplace (thirteen interviews were conducted in offices) which also added a more formal flavour. All these aspects made the interviews feel more like a professional discussion. This did not mean however, that people gave shallow accounts which did not provide ‘meaningful insights into their subjective view’ (Miller and Glassner 1997: 127). I think it just meant that due to the image of what research should be like and due to the nature of my topic people saw personal matters as not directly relevant to the interview. This in itself of course shows

⁹³ The ideas of objectivity in research and the insignificance of the personal may also be the result of the psychological background of my interviewees. Teaching methods in psychology in Russia do not involve the study of qualitative methods or of feminist critiques of methodology. Most methods taught (according to the State Standard for Psychology degree (see footnote 49) are usually mainstream and rely on the ideas of objectivity in research. This is also the way in which methodology is presented in many textbooks (see e.g. Druzhinin 2003; Nemov 1999; Rubinstein 1998; Volkov et al. 2003).

how cultural understandings of what ‘belongs’ to the professional sphere are engrained in people’s consciousness.

Besides the fact that my research topic made an impact on people’s accounts, exploring professional matters also influenced the way people perceived me and my research. Before starting my fieldwork I was worried that being much younger and using an unpopular research method would influence my interviewees’ perceptions of me as a credible researcher which is a common worry among younger researchers (Kenyon and Hawker 1999). Rivera et al. (2002) suggest that having an institutional affiliation made their access to participants easier and gave credibility to their study when researching in Russia. In my invitation letter I mentioned that I am a part of the Centre for Women’s Studies at the University of York and when I went to do my fieldwork I also had a letter with me confirming that I was a research student. I never used the letter because even when I came to interview people in centres no one ever asked me for an ID or a reference. I did not, however, deal with gatekeepers as Rivera et al. (2002) did. It is also difficult to gauge the extent to which declaring my institutional affiliation in the invitation letter might have induced a better response rate or gave credibility to me as a researcher, but my sense is that it helped to give a positive impression of myself as a researcher.

What I thought did give me credibility as a researcher (or at least it seemed that way) was the fact that I was focusing on professional matters. I think that in the eyes of my participants it was a ‘legitimate’ research topic and therefore people perceived me and my interviews more seriously. This was evident from the fact that they were interested in my project and tried to get me to understand things that professionally mattered to them. They were not complaining or seeking personal sympathy, they just highlighted existing. Most of my interviewees tried to be ‘objective’ and informative. For example, sometimes they chose not to answer questions if they had no knowledge of the issue, or they underlined that a statement was just their subjective opinion. For example, ‘I have evidence to back up my statement, it’s not like I say it for no reason (MF10)’; or, ‘I have this feeling, I don’t know, it’s just my own observation...’ (MF8). Another point was that they never asked me any personal questions (except for a couple of people who knew me quite well). Even those participants whom I knew from before and with whom I had quite a friendly chat at the beginning of our interview, treated the questions seriously and were very focused when answering them. This however may have been due to the ‘elitist’ flavour of my interviews – they were experts in their field, very busy with no time to waste and therefore wanted to be straight to the point. So, similar to what McDowell (1998: 2137) encountered in her elite interviews, my participants were also sometimes ‘extremely forceful and clearly had little time or desire for a sisterly exchange of views’. But this does not diminish the fact

that the topic and the context obviously had an influence on the interview process. So did I as a researcher, because as Shah (2004: 552) highlights, ‘face-to-face responses are not simply given to the question, but to a researcher who asks those questions’. This brings me to the discussion of my positionality in the research.

Insider/Outsider and Power Relations

The importance of reflecting on the researcher’s positionality and including the researcher’s experience in the process of research has been a prominent theme in feminist methodology literature (Ellis and Berger 2003; Hertz 1997; Maynard and Purvis 1994; Pini 2004; Reinharz 1992; Stanley and Wise 1993). Exploring the multi-levelled relations between an interviewee and the researcher helps to address issues of power relations, biases and other dynamics of the research process and to expose how they impact on the process of data production (Brayton 1997). In this context, many researchers (Kanuha 2000; Miller and Glassner 1997; Mullings 1999; Narayan 1993; Valentine 2002) focus on the insider/outsider dilemmas in the field and explore such questions as ‘who is a social insider/outsider’ and ‘what implications does this hold for interviewing’ (Shah 2004: 556).

Most often insider/outsider challenges are an inseparable part of researching cross-culturally because ‘in the case of cross-cultural encounters [interviewer and interviewees] often inhabit vastly different worlds or engage each other with sharply contrasting aims’ (Ryen 2003: 430). Cross-cultural research is generally defined as a ‘collection of data across cultural and national borders’ (idid.: 430). In my case, as well as for many other researchers, these borders were not only physical, but also linguistic, psychological, cultural and theoretical, to name a few. I share Valentine’s view (2002: 120) that insider/outsider positions are never fixed and rigid and that ‘[d]ualisms such as insider/outsider can never capture the complex and multi-faceted identities and experiences of researchers’. As Reinharz (1997: 3) points out, ‘[w]e both *bring* the self to the field and *create* the self in the field’ (italics as in original). So in this section I discuss the insider/outsider dilemma and power-relations in the course of my fieldwork by exploring certain aspects of the construction of my insider/outsider self during my interviews.

Even though at first glance I was definitely more of an insider in the field it was, nonetheless, complicated. There I was: a Russian woman who lives and works in the UK, born in Vladivostok, interviewing people in Moscow, a female interviewing both male and female counsellors, considerably younger than most of my participants, trained in clinical psychology but doing sociological research from a feminist perspective - and I could go on

with this list. All of the characteristics mentioned above inevitably made an impact on the relationship with my interviewees, some of them more visibly than others, but at the end of the day they were closely intertwined and constantly changing throughout the research process.

Researchers (Shah 2004; Zavella 1993) argue that there are several advantages in being an ‘insider’ in cross-cultural research, for example it eases the process of ‘getting in[to]’ the field. Furthermore, the knowledge of language and cultural patterns facilitates the process of ‘getting on’ with the interview and with meaning making. I definitely experienced some of these advantages during my fieldwork. For example, I anticipated the specificities of the recruitment process: knowing that Russians do not plan, I was less stressed about getting participants. I knew the language and cultural norms of meeting people and talking to people. Besides, it was easy for me in terms of practical matters because I had no problem with communication, transportation, accommodation and so on. Shah (2004: 560) argues that, ‘[a] shared cultural identity is less threatening on the one hand, and on the other, shared cultural knowledge enables a manoeuvring of flexible adaptations and alignments across and within interviews’. This was true in many respects in my fieldwork. In the majority of cases people seemed quite relieved when they figured that I was Russian and spoke Russian.⁹⁴ My interviewees relaxed even further when I told them that I had a degree in clinical psychology: sometimes people asked me whether they could use technical terms and when they learnt that they could, many mentioned that they felt relieved because they did not need to explain each and every term. The same was true regarding cultural references such as names, places, TV programs, magazines, proverbs and sayings, slang and so on. I thought my interviewees felt better since they did not have to explain these things. Having these advantages did not mean, however, that I experienced no problems at all, or that there was an instant rapport just because I was a Russian woman. I still had to work at ‘getting on’ with the interview (as I show below). But overall being Russian and having a background in psychology certainly appeared to be beneficial in establishing trust at the beginning of the interview.

In spite of these helpful aspects of being an ‘insider’, researchers (e.g. Christman 1988; DeLyser 2001; Kanuha 2000; Shah 2004) demonstrate that it can lose a researcher his/her critical point, make it difficult to detach oneself from the setting and to notice certain issues because they may seem obvious. I indeed experienced this myself; for instance, after several early interviews it seemed to me that people talked about obvious (to me) things, which were not as exciting as I had expected at all, and it took me some effort

⁹⁴ As I realised afterwards this was not clear from my invitation letter. I did not state I was Russian so coming from the UK I might have been British with a knowledge of Russian and/or a Russian name.

to make myself think differently and to detach myself from this position. In other words, my own knowledge of the profession and psychological training made me impatient about being told things that I thought I knew already. I needed to keep in focus that it was my interviewees' knowledge, experience and perceptions I was after, not my own.

There was another point that made the situation of being an 'insider' more complicated. That is, I felt like being an 'insider' allowed for few or no mistakes. I would argue that an 'outsider' (if participants perceive a researcher as such) is less 'punished' for breaking the cultural or other 'insider' norms, which means that with an 'outsider' interviewer there is a chance that participants will be more tolerant and forgiving and the consequences of one's 'misbehaviour' may be less severe. This concerns even the simplest things such as, for instance, addressing people in a conversation. Many of my interviewees, especially those who knew me or those who were older than 45, used the informal form of 'you' to address me or/and the informal form of my name. I, in turn (because I was younger) always had to use the formal form of 'you' to address my interviewees and address them by their first name and middle name (especially when they were over 46-48), as any other way would have been inappropriate (and unacceptable for a native speaker) and would be considered very rude. However, I know that in the case of foreigners people do not mind if they are addressed only by their first name and I am sure that if the formal and informal forms of 'you' were accidentally mixed up people would be more tolerant of this. If I had done so, it would have meant that I was meaning to be disrespectful.

Another example of 'intolerance' was me being an 'insider' in terms of my educational background. My interviewees felt relaxed about using technical terms but sometimes for this very reason they would limit their explanations to the phrase: 'You know what I mean'. As DeLyser (2001: 444) points out, 'when someone knows that you already know the answer, any probing for details may just aggravate the interviewee.' Several times when I asked my participants to elaborate on something they were surprised and sometimes to the extent of a certain hostility which I had to neutralise:

MK⁹⁵: So could you tell me what's the difference between counselling and coaching?

MF13: Oh, and you? Don't *you* know?!

MK: Well, I do, but there are different points of view and I am interested in yours...

MF13: Well... Fine...

⁹⁵ Maria Karepova

The reaction was less 'intense' when I asked to elaborate on something that in the participant's view was acceptable for me to not know. For example, those interviewees who worked in the military sphere or in organisational psychology eagerly explained certain concepts to me. Thus, my experience led me to think that in some cases the 'insider' researcher may fail to ask or clarify something not just because s/he perceives it as insignificant (Panini 1991; Shah 2004) but in order not to lose the positive flow of the interview. Shah (2004: 560) writes that '[a]n awareness of forbidden topics, hidden taboos and other unacceptables/acceptables and priorities avoids embarrassment and possible break down of the relationship between the insider and the interviewee.' But at the same time being an insider made me feel more bound and constrained by these normalising discourses because I was fully aware of the latter and I knew exactly that hostile attitudes were likely to follow my 'deviance from the accepted role model' (Palriwala 1991: 31).

At this point, I want to reflect on a difference between being an 'insider' vs being perceived as an 'insider', and being perceived as an 'insider' vs wanting to be an 'insider'. As Zavella (1993) argues, whether an 'insider' or 'outsider', a researcher continuously negotiates his/her status and one of the reasons for this is the need to adjust to the field and maintain rapport. It is common that a researcher wants to establish positive and friendly relationships with participants (Lohan 2000; McDowell 1998). I did too because, after all, my data depended on that. Usually researchers are aware that being an insider (or being seen as an insider) can in some respects make it easier to maintain trust during the interview (Pini 2004; Shah 2004). So for me this was where the negotiating and the changing part of the insider/outsider self came in.

In my situation, I had several significant similarities with my interviewees (or so it may seem): being Russian, having a similar educational background and in the majority of cases being of the same sex. Therefore, many of my participants perceived me as more of an 'insider' and consequently started to *expect* me to be one in all other respects. I felt that in order to continue to be seen as an 'insider' and get a positive response I was expected to possess all the 'normal' qualities, knowledges and points of view that the 'insider' should have (according to the interviewee's view).

One of the situations when I had to 'juggle' or adjust my insider/outsider identity(ies) was when it came to my theoretical position of being a feminist researcher.⁹⁶ For example, I felt fine introducing myself as a Russian, or as a psychologist, or as a social researcher. However, I did not explicitly say that I was researching my topic from a

⁹⁶ Another similar situation was when I did not share participants' liking for a particular therapeutic approach. For example I had training in cognitive therapies but many of my interviewees practised family therapy or psychodynamic approaches and considered the approach they practised better than others and sometimes notably expected me to agree with their view.

feminist perspective. The reason why I was not explicit about it was that, as I discussed in the Introduction, the word 'feminist' has quite a negative connotation in Russia for a number of reasons (Lissyutkina 1993). So when I introduced my work I mentioned that I was researching psychological counselling as a profession, focusing specifically on the development of women's careers and professional experiences. I sometimes had to explain why I was looking specifically at women which involved explaining bits of feminist methodology.⁹⁷ Without me using the word 'feminist' this seemed to produce a positive effect. However, the picture was different when I did mention my position explicitly.

In some instances when I talked to those interviewees whom I knew from before and who wanted to know more about my work I mentioned that I was employing a feminist lens. Several times it came up accidentally in the after-interview conversation and when the recorder was (again regretfully) switched off. So if we did talk about feminism we usually had a long discussion and often it was not exactly a very friendly one. Many people who knew me before seemed to be a bit disappointed in me or quite sarcastic about it and although I gave a lengthy explanation sometimes, not all of them seemed persuaded. And I had the feeling that, were I not a Russian, a woman, with training in counselling and their acquaintance on top of that, people would be more tolerant because the emphasis in the question 'why do *you* do it?' was on 'you'. So, sometimes when my interviewees expressed their views on feminism during the interviews, apart from the ethical question: 'to tell, or not to tell?', I had another dilemma: whether I should engage in an argument with my interviewees or whether I should just let them express their position. Usually I made a decision not to pursue the topic. For one, in the majority of situations I had only an hour or even less with my interviewees and I found it difficult to recite feminist theory in five minutes. Another reason was the possibility of losing rapport or involuntarily switching the focus of the interview. My situation was not unique of course. For instance, as Lohan (2000) mentions she had to adjust her performance depending on whom she was interviewing: for example she had to conceal her feminist identity when she was interviewing a priest. I also think the more of an 'insider' I was perceived to be, the more my interviewees expected me to be one in all respects. Therefore the more pressure I had to conform and the fewer 'mistakes' I was allowed to make in order not to lose the trust of my participants. This is a common feature of individual-group interrelation dynamics discussed in social psychology: 'actual or anticipated failure to fulfil expectations invites social disapproval and actions to modify behaviour or to reject individuals or the group'

⁹⁷ A feminist approach is not common for social sciences in Russia since feminist research is not widespread there and it is conventional sociological paradigms that dominate. So for example, quite often I was asked why I was researching only women and whether it was valid research if it was 'one-sided'.

(Hogg and Vaughan 2008: 288). And at the moment of interview it was important for me to be seen as a member of the group/insider to maintain rapport.

Several researchers (Christman 1988; Platt 1981) discuss another situation where a shared group membership is directly relevant to the research process and that is interviewing friends. Platt (1981) and Browne (2005) point out that some of the difficulties of researching people one knows include keeping confidentiality, researching delicate areas and keeping relationships after the interview process. In my case, I cannot say I was friends with the interviewees. Rather, we were acquainted.⁹⁸ Therefore the 'role-relationships' were not well-established or fixed (as in case of friends) so although the interview process with some people did feel a bit unnatural I did not think that this situation or the information people provided could put them at risk in any way or would influence our future relationship (see Platt 1981). Christman (1988) also points out that in the situation when researchers interview friends there is a danger of 'exploiting' their relationships and accounts. In my case, I thought that I was not close to my participants to the extent that they could not say 'no' to my interview request. In fact, two of my acquaintances/former colleagues whom I contacted in Vladivostok refused an interview because they were too busy or were going away. Another fact which arguably helped to balance out the power dynamics was that all the people I knew were older than me, therefore their age status 'countered' my researcher status. Thus I did not feel that I was 'exploiting' their friendship.

That said, what *can* potentially represent a difficulty is when a researcher knows his/her participants well, then later in the process of interpretation and writing up s/he can assume 'a likeness of mind where there was in fact a difference' (Borland 1991: 72). This can result in the feeling of misrepresentation and/or discontent on the participant's side. In my case, I was aware that my theoretical position was quite different from my participants'. I used only the accounts that my interviewees provided and did not put words in their mouth. However, knowing this does not eliminate the difficulty of walking a tight rope of (re)presentation, interpretation and in my case also translation.

The issues of negotiating 'selves', positions and statuses tie in closely with the question of negotiating power dimensions in a research situation (Briggs 2002; Hewitt-Taylor 2002; Valentine 2002), which I have already briefly touched on. It is quite a common standpoint in feminist writing that in the interview process power lies with the researcher⁹⁹ (Mullings 1999). However, scholars who work with 'elites' (e.g. McDowell 1998; Smith, K. 2006) question this assumption. Although I cannot fully define my

⁹⁸ Some of them were participants in various workshops and therapy training that I had previously attended; some were instructors on those programs.

⁹⁹ Here I mean the actual process of interviewing, not the process of interpretation and representation.

research as ‘elite’ I was still in many ways ‘researching up’ (Smith, K. 2006). First of all because most of my interviewees were highly qualified and many of them were well-known professionals in the field; and second, because most of them were older than me. In many interviews I felt that I was seen as a younger colleague and people were eager to lecture me on crucial matters in the profession. Several of them adopted an explicitly ‘pontificating’ tone and were clearly patronising. On a number of occasions I felt that my interviewee had significant control over our conversation. One interviewee for example hardly let me squeeze a word into her monologue and every time she was done talking she said: ‘Come on, give me some more questions, otherwise I’ll be chatting for ages!’ (MF10). In this case I was left in the position of a docile and eager listener.

However, the situation of interviewing seems to have felt different for different people. Usually in their professional practice counsellors are the ones asking questions and in the case of our interview this was the opposite. Rosow (1957) mentions that when he interviewed British psychiatrists such ‘role reversal’ caused various forms of anxiety and feelings of status insecurity. In my case it sometimes seemed as if at the beginning some participants felt quite uncomfortable. Several interviewees seemed to be frankly nervous which I could tell from their body language or the way they spoke. Therefore to get our conversation to flow smoothly I tried to underline the interviewee’s role as an expert throughout the interview, which was similar to what Rosow (1957) did in his study. Some participants pointed out at the end of the interview that it was strange for them to be talking about themselves, but they were positive about it, ‘Oh, it was so good to talk about it, I even got a bit nostalgic, you know’ (VF6). Therefore, as Katherine Smith (2006: 646) argues it is not necessarily that ‘the power and authority available to “elites” in their professional life will translate directly onto the interviewer-interviewee space’.

At other times, I could see that my interviewees were also searching and negotiating the facets of their ‘selves’ and my ‘self’ which would allow them to adjust comfortably to the situation. For instance, sometimes my interviewees chose to see my ‘outsider’ identity (the one of a ‘foreign’ researcher) in order to feel freer to express discontent and dissatisfaction with certain professional matters, for example, with their colleagues who were not as professional as they thought they should be, or with the standards of education or laws. In this event, they would distance me by saying something like, ‘I don’t know how it is in other countries but in Russia...’ (MF2); or, ‘You see, our country is not like Great Britain... That’s why ...’ (MF13). So the interview process was by no means an encounter of static positions. As Katherine Smith (2006: 645) states: ‘power exists in a variety of modalities... [T]hese modalities of power can be negotiated and are neither constant nor inscribed’. Moreover, I think it also depends on how these

modalities are perceived by the agents of the interview process. In my experience being aware of certain ‘insider’ norms and reflecting on them allowed me not to take these shifting power positions and attitudes personally. For instance, I did not perceive certain behaviours (e.g. a patronising attitude) as an offence or a lack of respect. I tried to reflect on what happened and why it happened and how these changing power positions influenced the interview process. My professional position as a researcher thus came into play.

Of course as scholars point out (Pini 2004; Valentine 2002) the process of reflexivity cannot be exhaustive. There are many dimensions that I have not discussed. For example, Reinharz (1997) argues that characteristics which are silenced may also have an impact on the interview.¹⁰⁰ However, it is not possible to reflect on every facet of the ‘self’ that I was in the field. So in this section I chose to focus on those aspects which were the most visible. In the following section I talk about the process of working with my data.

Transcribing, translating and analysing

Poland (2003) identifies several problems that can occur in the process of transcribing interview data such as omissions, mistaking one word for another similar word, maintaining correct punctuation, correcting the quality of speech in order to make it more readable etc. One way to tackle the ethical problem of unintentionally misrepresenting what participants actually said can be letting the interviewees read and verify transcripts. In my case, I did not have much trouble transcribing the interviews because in Russian there is practically no difference in accents across the country and usually what people say is completely understandable, so there is very little chance of mistaking one word for another. As I have already mentioned my interviewees showed no interest in reading the transcripts, except in one instance when my interviewee asked to read the transcript before I started analysing it. She had had a bad experience of giving an interview to a newspaper which had completely misrepresented her words, but she was satisfied after reading the transcript.

What did present problems was the translation. During the research process I translated from English to Russian and vice versa. There were difficulties in either ‘direction’ of this process. Goldstein (1995: 592) points out that interviewing in a multilingual setting is a challenging task because in order to ask meaningful questions one

¹⁰⁰ For example, it was not very obvious how my race and class figured in the research but it becomes visible when I picture a situation where I was an Afro-American working-class man interviewing those women. So being white and Russian also had an impact on the interview process.

has to be aware of the cultural norms that people have for talking about themselves and so on. 'Different groups of people have different restrictions on who may ask what questions of whom under what circumstances' (Goldstein 1995: 589). Being Russian it was easier in this sense for me to decide whether it was appropriate to ask certain things, how to address certain issues, how to formulate questions. For example, when asking the age of the participants I asked for their date of birth because it is not considered polite to ask directly someone's age, especially if the person is older. However, sometimes it was difficult during the interviews in terms of actual language because certain words simply do not exist in Russian. For example there is a word 'feminine' but there is no word for 'feminised'. In the same way there is no word for 'gender' in Russian. So it had to be explained through other words - usually: 'social sex' (see Braidotti 2002: 300) or the same word 'gender' is adopted. However, sometimes people may not understand what this means.

After I did my fieldwork I had to translate my transcripts into English. In my research I was the one translating my transcripts so in this sense it was easier for me to 'convey the meaning of original text' (Wallmach 2006: 11). However, although I am rather comfortable using the English language, I am not a professional interpreter and translating colloquial terms, proverbs and idioms presented a problem. The latter usually are difficult to translate as they have 'cultural meanings embedded in linguistic expression' (Temple and Young 2004). Venuti (1995), for example, criticizes idiomatic translation and argues for translating in the way that preserves the foreign flavour. In my case sometimes there were idioms which did not translate into English. However, I tried to find a possible equivalent and made a footnote describing what the Russian phrase means. Another challenging moment was translating grammar. The Russian language is very gendered, at least compared to the English language. For example, the form to refer to an abstract subject is not 'one' as in English, but 'he'. (The English version would be: If *one* wants to do X, *one* should do it. The Russian version: If *he* wants to do X, *he* should do it). Therefore, it was difficult for me to decide whether I should substitute 'he' for 'one' or the neutral 's/he'. Usually I used the neutral form. What I actually tried to do was spend quite a while trying to convey the style of my interviewees' speech. Sometimes people were really talkative and in a good mood, some were irritated, some were shy. This I tried to express in my English transcripts through using slang, conversational genre, denoting pauses, filler words and so on.

As Wallmach (2006: 2) writes, translation theorists have always struggled with the fact that 'translations are not the same as their originals and can never be the same.' On a theoretical level I agree that translations are just 'texts on their own' (ibid.). On the practical level, however, I struggled and it was quite disappointing sometimes that certain

‘flavours’ of language were just untranslatable. I was dissatisfied not because I was preoccupied with producing a true and authentic transcript, rather I felt disappointed that my English reader might not be able to see the whole colourful palette of meanings that my interviewees put into their words. Overall, translating was a very tiring process, but when I managed to articulate what my participants meant to say I felt very satisfied. These several problematic aspects of the translation process that I experienced, show that not only does a researcher influence the interview process but s/he affects the translation process by giving the data a certain interpretation. As Birbili writes:

When collecting data in one language and presenting the findings in another, researchers have to make a number of translation-related decisions. Words which exist in one language but not in another, concepts which are not equivalent in different cultures, idiomatic expressions and/or differences among languages in grammatical and syntactical structures are issues which call for very specific decisions. These decisions along with factors such as, for example, who the researcher or her translators are and what they ‘know’ have a direct impact on the quality of the findings of the research and the resulting reports (2000: 5).

Therefore this process of transcribing and translating should be acknowledged as part of one’s research (Larkin et al. 2007; Temple and Young 2004).

After transcribing and translating I proceeded to my analysis. I used thematic analysis for the interviews. As Attride-Stirling (2001) points out there is little guidance on how to perform this sort of analysis. However, some studies provide helpful descriptions of the strategies and stages of thematic analysis (e.g. Attride-Stirling 2001; Boyatzis 1997; Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006; Joffe and Yardley 2005; King 2004; Miles and Huberman 1994). My analysis process was a version of the ‘thematic networks’ strategy described by Attride-Stirling (2001). When I went into the field I had an interview schedule.¹⁰¹ Therefore I had already outlined certain areas that I was interested in (namely, education, working practices, gender views, and the process of professionalisation). After reading through the interviews I pinpointed several issues that were discussed in each area of interest: in the words of Attride-Stirling (2001: 388) I found ‘basic themes’. For example, some themes pertaining to the role of psychological education were: ‘appraisals of university education’, ‘reasons for entry into the profession’, ‘difficulties at the start’, ‘qualification upgrade reasons’ etc. I then grouped them into more general ‘organising

¹⁰¹ For interview schedule see Appendix IV.

themes' (e.g. 'the functions of education', 'choices and constraints of education', 'the role of gender and age'). The analysis of these 'organising themes' led to the development of 'global themes'/arguments in my chapters (see Attride-Stirling 2000: 389). I did not use computer-assisted data analysis tools. However, at the stage of formulating basic themes while reading through the interviews I made a grid where I recoded basic codes and the number of lines in the interview transcript where a certain theme was discussed. I had such a grid for each chapter and found it very helpful during the writing-up process. Since it was the first time I did interviews, I remembered most of them very clearly which is why I did not feel the need to utilise computer-assisted analysis. It was also a relatively small sample, in which I had been the sole person responsible for collecting the data, transcribing and translating it, which means that I could actually recall a great deal of the data by the time I came to analyse it.

There is an on-going discussion about the ethics of (re)presentation and the balance of power in (feminist) qualitative research (Cornwall and Jewkes 1995; Edwards and Ribbens 1998; Hertz 1995; Kirsch 1999; Mantzuokas 2004; Mauthner et al. 2002; Wolf 1996). As Karnieli-Miller (2009) writes, at the stage of transcribing, interpreting and writing up the power over the information mainly lies with the researcher. Various researchers have found different ways to redress this balance, which can involve anything from allowing the participant to transcribe their interviews or comment on the transcripts to co-editing the research (Brayton 1997; Grundy et al. 2003; Vernon 1997; Kirsch 1999). These strategies produce their own difficulties, for instance, participants can be shy to confront the researcher, participants can recognise each others' accounts in research, there can be differences in interpretation and so on (Borland 1991; Forbat and Henderson 2005; Kirsch 1999). Therefore, there is no one way to tackle this issue.

In my case since I could not expect my interviewees to read their transcripts and as I mentioned before, the majority of them did not express much interest in the final results of the project. Another constraint was that this PhD manuscript is written in English and the majority of my interviewees would not be able to read it. However, in line with the ethics of feminist research process (see Brayton 1997; Hertz 1997; Kelly et al. 1994; Maynard and Purvis 1994) there were several strategies I employed to tackle the issue of (re)presentation and power in the process of data analysis. First of all, I tried to convey the meaning of what my interviewees said as accurately as possible and translate the transcripts to the best of my ability. Second, after interviewing I took the participant's e-mail address and promised to send them a summary of my research findings translated into Russian and any information on publications. I also plan to publish an article in a Russian-language journal in the field of psychology. Finally, throughout the process of transcribing,

interpreting and writing up I tried to be as aware and as reflexive as possible about my personal and theoretical standpoint, which is one of the main ways in which feminist research deals with (re)presentation issues (Edwards and Ribbens 1998; Hertz 1997; Letherby 2003; Reinharz and Chase 2003). As Gillian Rose (1997: 309) argues, reflexivity can never be exhaustive since if it is claimed to be such it presupposes 'a transparently knowable agent whose motivations can be fully known'. Instead, as Valentine (2002: 126) suggests, 'our focus should be looking at the tensions, conflicts and unexpected occurrences which emerge in the research process... By exploring these moments we might begin to decentre our research assumptions, and question the certainties that slip into the way we produce knowledge'. This was one of my main aims in this chapter and throughout the process of writing this thesis.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have discussed some of the key methodological considerations that are relevant to my research and my methods. Namely, I explained that using semi-structured interviews was the best strategy for considering my research questions and methodology. I found this the most appropriate way to investigate the professional experiences of female counsellors and the meanings they attribute to them (see Maynard 1994; Reinharz and Chase 2003). I then discussed my choice of research sites, my sample and sampling techniques (snowballing and using e-mail invitations). The main limitation of my sampling procedures was that due to the exclusionary aspects of both strategies a younger cohort of people was not represented widely enough. However, in the existing situation those sampling techniques were the best (and sometimes the only) possible ways of contacting people and proved to be effective.

I also showed how the interview process was influenced by the cultural context, by the ways in which my participants perceived it and by the research topic. I reflected on several aspects of my insider/outsider positionality in research (e.g. being Russian, having psychological education, being young etc.) and demonstrated how they tied in with the power dimensions in the research and what the implications were. These 'facets' of my self were advantageous in certain respects but at the same time caused tension in other situations. However, they were not static and were constantly negotiated and changing throughout the interview process. Finally, I discussed some of the issues of transcribing, translating and analysing suggesting that those were not easy and straightforward but a rather complex process which also to a certain extent affected the data production in my

research. Thus, in this chapter by exercising reflexivity, I have demonstrated that exposing the impact of various contextual factors on the research process helps to understand the ways in which data and meanings are constructed and shaped.

The next four chapters are based on the analysis of my interview data and cover four main areas of the development of the counselling profession: education, work environment, gender views in/of the profession and the process of professionalisation.

Chapter 3: The Making of a Professional: Education and Qualifications

Introduction

For most of my interviewees (20 out of 26) psychology was their second higher education degree (see Chapter 2) and after re-training most of them left their previous occupations to become counsellors. The change of one's profession at a mature age is one of the distinctive features of the transition period in Russia. It was not common in the Soviet period to change direction in one's career mid-way: '[a] profession, for most people, was for life, with employment guaranteed from school or college to pension' (Bridger and Kay 1996: 26). However, with the collapse of the heavy industries, 'the rapid revaluation of existing and new occupations forced people in middle age with established past careers to switch occupations' (Sabirianova 2001: 199). Yaroshenko et al. (2006) argue that mobility *per se* did not benefit women in terms of pay. However, the distinctive feature of my sample was that women did not just change their *job*, they radically changed their *profession*, i.e. they did not end up doing supplementary or low skilled jobs, like many women in other studies (e.g. Ashwin et al. 2006; Yaroshenko et al. 2006). Their intention to change a job resulted in undertaking a second (or third) university degree, while job mobility in other studies did not necessarily involve getting comprehensive re-training (e.g. Yaroshenko et al. 2006). This, however, is tightly related to the socio-economic status of my interviewees (i.e. they were mainly middle-class women) and, therefore, I do not dismiss the findings of the above mentioned studies. Rather, I suggest that the patterns and outcomes of job mobility may be different in my sample.

Several scholars argue that a higher level of education does not give women as many opportunities in the labour market as men, and can sometimes work against them (Clark and Sacks 2004; Pascall and Cox 1993; Ratliff 1991; Yaroshenko et al. 2006). Kyui (2009: 33) however, argues that 'the presence of higher education increases the probability of work' for women. Katz (1999: 427) points out that 'the advantages to women of higher education are underestimated when only monthly earnings are studied' because there are other non-monetary benefits such as various perks and prestige connected with education, the ability to work less time for higher pay and so on. Furthermore, as I shall argue below, the functions of education varied for my participants and were not always immediately related to the pursuit of a professional career in a given sphere.

Thus, in this Chapter I explore the complexity of the interplay of various personal, cultural and economic reasons which brought women to this specific profession and identify the different ways in which women had used and had returns for their psychological education. I start by outlining a variety of motivations for the choice of counselling as a career. Next, I discuss the opportunities and constraints that enabled (or forced) the interviewees to gain their second (or third) university degree and analyse the reasons why psychology is so ‘popular’ with women. Finally, I analyse the ways in which qualification upgrades (continuing professional development (CPD)) function in the profession and what role they play for female psychologists.

Changing the Profession

Sabirianova (2001) argues that the most common cause of occupational change and mobility in the period of the transition was the collapse of industries and loss of jobs. This ‘push’ factor was evident in my sample and especially among those with a degree in the ‘hard’ sciences (e.g. chemistry, physics):

I had a child and I took a maternity leave... and then all this perestroika began and it didn’t make any sense to go back to chemistry because there was no money there at all. (MF7)

I was a chemist and I worked on chemicals called endolysins – these were the new kind of medication. But due to those events – I mean all this perestroika – new medication stopped being produced here. You could only work for certain international companies which did not produce the best quality drugs to be honest. So, actually, I was left without a job... (MF11)

It became impossible to work on my topic [chemistry] because there was no funding at all... It became impossible to work. We had no chemicals; there were times when we had no electricity in the building... So I left. And started to think about what to do... Because, actually, I had to eat something... (MM2)

The above accounts suggest that unemployment and poor material conditions in sectors challenged by economic restructuring obviously served as a drive for changing jobs. This is consistent with the findings of other scholars (Ashwin 2006a; 2006c; Clarke 1999b). Financial motives continued to be relevant for those who received their psychological

education after 1999 when the severity of the economic crisis decreased. For example, one of my interviewees who embarked on her psychology degree in 2005 clearly stated that the prospect for higher financial returns of being a counsellor (compared to the job she had at the time) played an important part in her decision to change the profession:

MK: So why did you choose psychology?

VF8: Well, I'm an architect by my first education and I'm an experienced lecturer [more than 25 years] and I teach engineering graphics and computer graphic packages at a college. So there I get about a hundred roubles [£2] per hour...

MK: Oh...

VF8: Yes... yes... But as a counsellor I can get a thousand per hour [£20]... Depending on the client, of course... But anyway, the difference is obvious...

So clearly, changing the profession continued to be a way for many to cope with unemployment or the lower income earned in previous jobs even after perestroika. And compared to my interviewees' old professions, counselling appeared to be a more lucrative job. However, to say that the material aspect was the only reason why the women changed their profession belies the complexity of the situation.

The important characteristic of my sample was that those participants did not just seek any job when they lost theirs, but that they re-trained for another *profession*. This means that they had to fund their additional higher education degree. Moreover, out of the possible alternatives they chose psychology, which as many of my interviewees noted, has a long 'zero period' in terms of earnings, which means that before this profession becomes profitable it requires a lot of investment in education and a lot of time to acquire appropriate experience:

In this profession there is a very long what I call 'zero period' and it is very difficult to get your first clients and to get enough clients. If you have two or three clients of course it is really interesting to work... but they do not earn you enough money which you get when you work at a regular job. (MF2)

In order to make money here [in this profession] one should first make a lot of investments... And not everyone can afford such considerable spending, and spend 5 or 10 years becoming a good specialist. (VM1)

In fact more than half of my interviewees expressed doubts that their educational expenses would ever pay off. Thus, although most researchers name financial struggle as a primary reason for changing jobs (see Ashwin 2006a; Clarke 1999a; 1999b) only three of my interviewees explicitly stated that they were economically pushed to take up a new profession. Gaining material benefit was indeed one of the reasons for changing a profession in my sample, but as I argue below the socioeconomic background and gender of the participants resulted in several other reasons for a job change. So what made or/and allowed my interviewees to choose to undertake a second university degree as a means of professional mobility and why was it psychology that they chose?

A Second Degree: The Luxury of Choice?

The re-entry of women into higher education has been explored by various scholars (Clayton and Smith 1987; Pascall and Cox 1993; Pickering and Galvin-Schaefer 1988). Clayton and Smith (1987) point out a number of reasons that guide women's decision to re-enter education, for example self-improvement and self-actualisation, vocational and financial motives, the desire to get gain better knowledge or to be able to help people and so on. Some of these findings resonated with my own. However, as I show in this Chapter, contextual differences (e.g. all the women who were re-trained in counselling already had a degree, the differences in the Russian higher education system, cultural attitudes towards education differ etc.) also bring about a different set of motivations for re-entry into education. This list of reasons discussed in the section below is not exhaustive but I suggest that the aspects I focus on illustrate how and why the reasons for the choice to re-train for a psychology degree are the product of the interaction of various structural factors, among them some which are specific to the Russian context.

New opportunities

The major factor that seemed to inform the decision for the change/choice of professional qualification and which later on led to the successful pursuit of a career in this field was personal interest. This was a common thread in the majority of interviews: 12 out of 17 of female and all of the male interviewees for whom psychology was their second/third education mentioned that they had an initial interest in psychology long before they got a chance to study it. Thus, most of my interviewees did not do *just* another degree, they wanted a *psychology* degree. Similarly, three out of six participants for whom psychology

was their first and only university degree cited interest as one of the reasons for undertaking this course. But obviously personal interest had to be supported by opportunities to act on it. For example, some mentioned family influence as an obstacle to doing a psychology degree as their first education:

Initially, when I graduated from school I wanted to do either medicine or psychology, but my mother talked me out of applying for these specialisations.
(MF2)

Both of my parents are chemists, so I thought that it [chemistry] was quite interesting. And then my father had a good position and he could help me get a job later. So actually my future was awaiting me. Later when I got into psychology I realised that chemistry wasn't really my thing, you know...
(MF7)

When people undertake their first higher education in Russia they are 16-17 years old, which means that they may still be strongly influenced by their parents. As Bourdieu (1984) shows, people also largely follow their parents' professions. In Russia, this trend is also augmented by the immense importance of personal networks for career advancement (see Clarke 2002; Ledeneva 1998; Lonkila 1997; Rose, R. 2000). Thus, in contrast to younger people, those who embark on a second university degree seem to make more of a personal decision.

Another obvious reason why those who had an initial interest in psychology did not pursue it as a first degree was the absence of this type of education. The first independent psychology department in Moscow State University was opened in 1942 and became a Faculty of Psychology in 1966¹⁰² so there was a chance to study psychology in Moscow. However, as discussed in Chapter 1, the focus of the degree was mainly scientific and one still could not get training in counselling and psychotherapy before the 1989. As for Vladivostok, the first psychology department was opened only in 1991, which meant that no one could study psychology there during Soviet times:

I wanted to be either a psychologist or a horse breeder^[103]. It was a kind of obsession you know... But as in my city [Vladivostok] I didn't have any

¹⁰² See the webpage of the Faculty of Psychology at Moscow State University for more details. Available at <<http://www.psy.msu.ru/english/info.html>>. Accessed on 23 January 2010.

¹⁰³ These two 'interests' of my interviewee may sound very diverse. However it may show that Russian people of that generation were not constrained in terms of disciplinary categories, i.e. they could aspire to

chances to study any of these things – the horse-breeding school was situated quite far from my city, and psychology could be studied properly only in St. Petersburg or Moscow. Moreover, my parents didn't favour my idea to leave for a different city so they wouldn't let me. So all that remained a dream. I chose to study a completely different thing - information systems, so I'm actually a computer engineer. (VF2)

This interviewee indicates the absence of a whole range of occupational opportunities (including psychology) available to people in the distant regions of Russia. Therefore, as soon as the opportunity appeared many individuals in my sample willingly took it, leaving their old jobs:

Well, firstly, even when I was studying in high school, this sphere was very interesting to me. I graduated as a special needs therapist for children. Then I worked for some time, and I heard that at that time the faculty of psychology was opened here in Vladivostok. It was the very first intake and I was one of the very first students there. (VF1)

Thus, the removal of barriers such as family pressure and the improvement of educational facilities allowed people to pursue the degree they were interested in. Another factor that influenced the interviewees' educational choices was the difference in the accessibility of the undergraduate (first) and additional higher education degrees in Russia.

Equal Chances?

The idea which the Soviet system of education was based on was that higher education (as well as other types of education) had to be equally accessible to all citizens. Therefore university education was free, state universities were maintained at state expense, and students were provided for by the state (accommodation, a stipend, free books etc.) (Jones 1994; Holmes et al. 1995). In order to study for free one had (and still has) to pass competitive entrance examinations (usually three or four oral exams on core subjects). But in the early 1990s the university education system in Russia began to undergo changes (see Avis 1990; Bain 2001; Balzer 1994; Mihailov 2006). One of these was the emergence of

completely different professions at the same time. For example, according to the official Soviet ideology all professions were rendered equally important, which can be exemplified by the well-known Russian saying: Все профессии нужны, все профессии важны (all professions are important, all professions are needed). Moreover, in the Russian language there is no distinction between the words 'profession' and 'occupation' (Ashwin et al. 2006).

private universities that charged tuition fees. Additionally state universities also introduced the system of tuition fees (Bain 2001). Now (2010) every department has a certain number of state-funded places and a certain number of places offered on a fees basis. This ratio differs from university to university (Gerber and Schaefer 2004; Roberts et al. 2000). There are also differences in the admission procedure (see Smolentseva 2002). The application process and the conditions of admission for the state-funded places are determined by a Decree of the Ministry of Education¹⁰⁴ and require passing competitive entry exams (or more recently, submitting the results of the Unified National Exam (see Avanesov 2006)). However, the Decree states that universities are free to determine other admission procedures for the ‘fee-paying’ places. This means that in some universities the admission procedures for fee-paying and state-funded places are similar; however, in many universities, those who are ready to pay tuition fees are allowed to score less on the entrance examinations. Those obtaining a second/third university degree in Russia, without exception, have to pay tuition fees. To be admitted one is required to have a prior university degree and the entry examinations are usually much easier (if at all present) than those required when entering university for the first time. For example, both at the Far Eastern National University¹⁰⁵ (the biggest university in the Primorsky Region) and at Moscow State University¹⁰⁶ one is required to just pass an interview in order to be admitted into most second higher education programs. The differences in the admission procedures clearly led to a difference in the accessibility of education for my younger and older interviewees.

All my interviewees who studied psychology as their first degree tried to apply for state-funded places and all confirmed that the application process for the (state-funded) undergraduate degree was very competitive. The main difficulty was, of course, the examination. For example, some of my interviewees clearly had the determination to get into psychology and after failing their entrance exams three of them tried again, sometimes several years in a row: ‘Well, for two years I tried to enter Moscow State University – no luck’ (MF3). On failure, two women chose to go to a less prestigious university; the other one chose another specialty altogether, however, later decided to pursue psychology as her second higher education degree:

¹⁰⁴ Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation Decree №50 On the Establishment of the Process for Admission to the Higher Education Institutions of the Russian Federation, 14.01.2003. Available at <http://www.edu.ru/legal/SESSION/S__HpfVz6tY/PILOT/main.html>. Accessed 18 November 2008.

¹⁰⁵ See the Far Eastern National University’s website for more detail. Available at <<http://idpo.wl.dvgu.ru/?a=page&id=17&FESUSID=c8e4b162e05a39293c8fd0ed4974072b>>. Accessed 18 November 2008.

¹⁰⁶ See Lomonosov Moscow State University’s website for more detail. Available at <<http://www.msu.ru/entrance/second-ed.html>>. Accessed 18 November 2008.

Well, to begin with, initially I tried to apply for a psychology degree, but I couldn't get there, I failed the exams. So I went to study engineering... I then studied economics. I managed to work in this sphere for a while and then I realised that it was psychology that I really wanted. So then, I entered that additional higher education degree program in a psychology department...
(MF9)

So the exams obviously prevented some from entering psychology, whilst on the contrary others could be drawn to psychology because the exams were easier there than for other degrees:

MK: Why did you choose psychology?

MF6: Actually, I had a very ordinary reason, honestly speaking, at that time it was practically the only degree in Moscow which didn't require a maths entrance exam [laughs]. So because it's been two years since my high school graduation, with all my 'respect' to mathematics, I knew that I wasn't going to spend my time learning it over again. I just chose the faculty where exams were easy enough for me to study for and so I passed them.

Such a 'superficial' reason for the choice of one's higher education may appear surprising. It is partly explained by Dmitrieva's (1996: 76) argument that in the Soviet Union 'people treated it [higher education] formalistically; for most people it was having a certificate of higher education which was important, not what they actually studied'. However, it can be argued that if students cannot not secure a state-funded place in the subject they aspire to, they would go for the 'random'/second best option because with the higher education boom since the 1990s (Arapov 2006), having a degree became almost a necessity for successful employment, especially for women (see Clark and Sacks 2004; Katz 1999; Yaroshenko et al. 2006). Ratliff (1991) argues that various surveys showed that girls tended to be slightly less successful in being admitted to university in the USSR. However, Gerber and Schaefer (2004) claim that, overall, gender equality of enrolment and graduation from the universities (at least at the undergraduate level) existed in the Soviet Union. In the same vein, Kyui (2009) demonstrates that in 2007 the overall percentage of women with a higher education degree in Russia was higher than that of men: 16.3% vs 15.6%. Inevitably, the enrolment figures and the level of discrimination depend on the speciality. My participants did not provide direct evidence of experiencing gender discrimination during the application process for the undergraduate state-funded degree in

psychology. There was however, such evidence for the accessibility of free *post-graduate* education. This is how one of my interviewees commented on the post-graduate options:

I know that at Moscow State University in the Clinical Psychology Department where there are not that many men they [the faculty] say that in order for men not to get into the army they are encouraged to apply for *aspirantura*¹⁰⁷ and girls are encouraged to apply for *soiskatelstvo* because girls are not liable to conscription and they don't care. So it does mean that men get into a better research degree and they have a better chance for promotion and so on. (MF11)

To sum up, the presence of the competitive entry requirements inevitably influenced entry choices for those receiving a first university degree among my interviewees. Securing a state-funded first higher education (undergraduate or post-graduate) obviously seemed to represent certain difficulties.

In contrast, none of my 20 interviewees who had psychology as their additional (second or third) higher education degree mentioned their application process or difficulties with it. Only one out of seventeen women briefly mentioned the application procedure which consisted of an admission interview (which did not sound a very daunting procedure):

[My] husband turned on the radio and there was an advertisement there. ... It was announced that anybody could study for this new [psychology] degree but had to pay fees. So I just had a cup of tea... And... Well, it was 9 am when I hear the advertisement and probably by 10 am I was already there at the university. I had an interview first... and they were surprised that I already had had two higher education degrees and was going to get a third one. So I started to study... (VF5)

The complete absence of the description of the admissions process from my interviewees' accounts suggests that entering the university for the second time was much easier. Thus,

¹⁰⁷ An *aspirantura* is similar to a PhD program when students are officially registered for a full-time post-graduate degree (Kandidat Nauk – candidate of science). The degree is usually state-funded, provided one passes all required exams. Aspirants attend lectures, they are supposed to have regular supervisions and finish in 3-4 years' time. They also get a stipend and they usually teach. It is easier (and is a normal practice) for aspirants to stay and work at the University where they studied. A *soiskatel* is a person who is also registered for a candidate of science degree. Usually such students pay fees, they do not attend any classes but are required to pass exams. It usually takes them more time (5-6 years or more) to finish because they usually combine work and study. They do not teach and have a looser supervision scheme. Overall, they are not given as much attention as full-time students and are more likely to drop out (see Kasevich 2006; Knyazev 2004).

in a way, the lack of academic entrance barriers (i.e. exams, tests) for second higher education programs in Russia gave many of my interviewees a chance to study the subject they wanted and to change their career path for the better.

Moreover, the variety of forms of study for the second higher education degree (evening, extramural, the combination of the two) made it easier for many women to pursue it. For example, for those who worked or were on maternity leave:

The form of studying that they were offering – *ochno-zaochnaya* [a mix of correspondence and intramural education] was really convenient for me. It meant that I had to attend the lectures and exams for 3 weeks each semester and the rest was independent learning. Since I had a small child it was very convenient for me. (MF7)

The fact that a variety of forms of study exist, which makes higher education more accessible for women is not unique to Russia. However, the distinctive feature of the Russian system of education is that those enrolled in additional higher education or those in alternative forms of education (e.g. part-time, extramural) are mainly middle-aged adults. This was pointed out by the majority of my interviewees who stated that most of their classmates were middle-aged. Thus, it may be argued that because this system is mainly designed and largely caters for adult students this, in a way, eliminates certain psychological and attitude problems of being a mature student which can arise for their counterparts in other educational systems¹⁰⁸ (see e.g. Kasworm's (1990) on mature undergraduate students in the US; Reay et al. (2004) on women mature students in the UK). Thus, a certain accessibility of the additional higher education gave some people new professional opportunities. However, another side of the coin was, of course, that those applying for a second university degree had to pay for that education.

Funding One's Education

As I have mentioned before, second higher education in Russia is not free under any circumstances. In 2008/2009 the annual tuition fees for second higher education courses at Moscow State University (Psychology Department) were RUB220000 (about £4400)¹⁰⁹. At the Far Eastern State University (Psychology Department) it was approximately

¹⁰⁸ There are various studies on the experiences and psychological and structural problems of (women) mature students in universities (e.g. Kasworm 1990; Merrill 1999; Reay et al. 2002; Richardson, J. 1994). An in-depth discussion of this topic, however, is out of the scope of my thesis.

¹⁰⁹ For more details see < <http://www.psy.msu.ru/educat/special/forms.htm>>. Accessed 24 November 2008.

RUB120000 (about £2400)¹¹⁰ a year. This, of course, is much higher than in the 1990s, but still gives an idea that it is not a cheap endeavour considering the level of average monthly wages in Russia.¹¹¹ Furthermore, there is almost no system of support grants or scholarships. Obviously, to spend time in education and then to spend another several years establishing oneself as a professional is not something everyone can afford. So how did these women fund their studies? There were three main sources of funding in my sample: workplace sponsorship, combining work and study and ‘personal funds’.

Two of my interviewees were sponsored by their workplaces because the institutions they worked in (a school and a hospital) were in need of a psychologist. For one of them the funding ceased before she finished the course so she had to pay the rest of the tuition herself. Six participants (including the three men in my sample) said that they had to rely only on themselves to pay the fees. This usually meant that they had to combine their primary job with studying, do several jobs, work during weekends and holidays:

So I went to get the second higher education. To pay for it I worked as a journalist and also worked part-time as an interpreter. (MM2)

Well, the first one [the first profession] – computer engineering – brought me money, the second one [psychology] didn’t earn me that much. I mean my first profession gave me an opportunity to get another degree, as I had to pay for it. And I did it without any help from anyone. (VF2)

I didn’t have any days off when I was studying: I worked 24 hours a day to pay for it [laughing]. (MF1)

In respect of funding, regional differences were prominent. For example, one woman from Vladivostok was trying to obtain her psychology degree in 1991 and since psychology courses were not offered in her home town she had to go to another city. This meant that she had to work in order to pay for her education and to pay her living expenses but there was more to it. The Russian work culture is not generally a mobile one (Andrienko and Guriev 2004). Working and living in a different city than your native one in Russia (even as a citizen) is complicated by various obstacles, and most of all the

¹¹⁰ For more details see <<http://idpo.wl.dvgu.ru/?a=page&id=18>>. Accessed 24 November 2008.

¹¹¹ RUB 15700 (£320) in Vladivostok and RUB 35737 (£525) in Moscow (see Chapter 2).

address registration regulations¹¹², which largely restrict people's mobility and opportunities (ibid.: 11). These constraints made the situation more difficult for those who did not have appropriate educational facilities at hand:

VF6: I went to St. Petersburg because the first one-year psychology courses for people with university degrees were launched there. So I went... There was a problem though: I had to find a job... It's either an organization paid for you, or you had to find a job. I had to pay for my education since no company paid for me. I started to look for work... I could potentially work informally as a tailor but I didn't want that...

MK: So was it difficult to find work then?

VF6: Yea... No... Well, it was all somewhat a bit illegal, I mean, getting a job... the thing was that to work legally I needed to have an address registration... And being a tailor... I understood that I would have to work from six a.m. and leave with the bell every day and study too... I realised the horror of it and understood that I wouldn't be able to do that. (VF6)

Thus, not only was it tiring and difficult to support oneself financially while living away from home, but it entailed legal difficulties. This woman eventually did not pursue her degree and left St. Petersburg. She got her psychological education in Vladivostok as soon as this degree was launched. Therefore, geographical factors restricted (and continue to restrict) people's chances for education.

So far, I have shown that the external funding of education was not very widespread and self-funding appeared to be a difficult venture. This brings me to the discussion of the most common (17 out of 26 interviewees) source of funding which the interviewees referred to as 'personal funds'. This kind of funding was used only by women in my sample and usually meant that the women's families (parents or husbands) paid tuition fees and supported the women during the period of studies. As one of my interviewees said: 'I have never been in a situation where I had to provide for the family myself' (MF1). Similarly, another interviewee, although she tried to finance her studies

¹¹² Address registration or *propiska* 'is a system of registration at the local police department which the Soviet Government used to restrict migration. The registration is still required for getting access to official jobs, social benefits, and public goods such as kindergartens, schools and healthcare. In most regions registration is granted to all applicants, although in some (Moscow, Sakha-Yakutiya republic, Krasnodarskiy and Stavropolskiy kray [regions]) the authorities can still deny registration even though this is against the federal law' (Andrienko and Guriev 2004: 11). In Moscow one can be registered at a rented flat, but not many landlords are willing to register tenants because it entails paying taxes for letting their flat which people usually try to avoid (personal communication).

herself, pointed out that her constant process of studying was only possible with the help of her husband:

My husband had to provide for the family alone because I couldn't earn anything – everything I earned I paid for my education! [laughs] (MF14)

The majority of my female interviewees who chose psychology 'out of interest' were not bound by economic constraints in their choice:

MK: Why did you decide to study psychology?

MF11: Well, it was interesting... It was very interesting at that time and I had free time to study then... And yes, out of everything that was out there it was the most interesting for me. My husband was earning good money so I could afford not to work for money but to choose something according to my interest.

Studies of women returning to higher education in Britain found that 'women adult students tended to come from higher social class backgrounds than men' because marriage can be 'a stable financial base for a return to the educational world' (Pascall and Cox 1993: 15). This was similar in my sample. Undertaking a second university degree was a choice which very much related to economic opportunity and, therefore, socioeconomic/class background. The outcomes of this situation were twofold. On the one hand, the changes in the system of education in Russia broadened career opportunities for many women and indeed the majority of my interviewees experienced an upward occupational mobility after receiving their second degree. On the other hand, the necessity to sustain oneself while studying and at the start of the career eliminated education as an option for career advancement for many categories of women and men (particularly those outside the middle and upper class). Furthermore, given that 'education for women is almost a condition of success' (Yaroshenko et al. 2006: 144) it can be argued that financially restricted access to the (second) higher university degree can lead to a further widening of the economic gap between different categories of women. Those who initially had an opportunity will advance and others will be left to do lower-paid and low-prestige jobs.

As I have mentioned, being funded by 'personal funds' was reported by women only.¹¹³ This situation and the higher number of women in (psychological) education in Russia can partly be explained by Kiblitckaya's (2000: 91) argument that 'women [in

¹¹³ My male sample was too small to allow generalisations in this respect. However, all my male interviewees sponsored their education themselves.

Russia] are expected to be “second-order” breadwinners’. This stereotype in the case of my research meant two things: 1) it was seen as more acceptable for a woman to be sponsored, and 2) women seemed to have less pressure to start earning money, which made the choice of psychology more accessible for them, since as I indicated it takes a while to start earning in counselling. Thus, on the one hand, women seemed to be freer than men in their choice to pursue an additional university degree. On the other hand, this situation highlights the persistence of gender stereotypes whereby women are constructed as financially dependent while men have to provide for themselves and their families. ‘Being sponsored’ also bears negative consequences for women’s work and earnings (as I discuss in Chapter 4).

Educational Prestige and Networking

One final point to make about the system of higher education is that what the individuals in my sample seemed to gain from this experience was not only formal knowledge of psychology. In fact, consistent with other research on counselling in Russia (Balachova et al. 2001; Ivannikov 2006) my interviewees criticised their degree programs. This interviewee, for instance, confirmed that she mostly learnt their skills elsewhere:

By my first education I am a theatre director and I think that directing actually helped me a lot and gave me much more knowledge about people than the lectures in the department of psychology did. (MF10)

The majority (16 out of 26) of my participants had various complaints about the university education that they received, the main criticisms being the lack of practical knowledge, the poor structure of the course and so on. In fact, as I show later on in this chapter, the majority of counsellors received their knowledge of therapy methods at various CPD programs rather than at university. What the counsellors did find important regarding higher education was the prestige of a given university. For instance, two of my younger interviewees who had initially received their psychology degrees at low-prestige universities decided to study at Moscow State University later, on a pay basis (despite the fact that the course apparently promised to give them little in terms of knowledge):

Well, actually, when I was applying to study at Moscow State University, I already had a psychology degree and some qualification up-grades, and my teachers actually tried to dissuade me from applying there... They said that it

would probably be useless. Nevertheless, I think that this education wasn't useless... Although... Basically in respect of learning something new it gave me very little... (MF3)

Another interviewee from Vladivostok, who could have studied psychology as her first (and free) university degree, had not done so because the prestige of the local university was so low that she did not find it worthwhile:

Why didn't I go to study psychology right away? Well, because we didn't have a psychology department 'nearby'... I didn't consider Ussuriysk^[114] as a good place to get a higher education degree... For me the status of the institution is very important. And... of course, I could consider only the three most prestigious options which existed at that time: Moscow, Tallin or St. Petersburg. It's just my parents didn't have an opportunity to pay for my studies then. (VF5)

So the reputation of the university seemed to be an asset in itself. In fact 11 out of 17 Moscow-based interviewees studied at Moscow State University, the oldest and one of the most prestigious universities in Russia. Six of my interviewees from Vladivostok studied at the Far Eastern National University which is the largest and the most prestigious in the Far Eastern of Russia. Of course, studying at a more prestigious university may mean better knowledge¹¹⁵, but an equally important thing for my interviewees seemed to be the degree certificate's value which depended on the prestige of the institution's ranking (see also Boylan 1993).

Another very important benefit of highly-rated universities was the opportunity of networking. For example, one of my interviewees met her future boss while at university:

Right in my first year I met this man who created this centre where we are now, I mean he already had it then. So he invited me to work here and that's how I found a place to work. (MF7)

¹¹⁴ Ussuriysk is a small (by Russian standards) town about 50 miles to the north of Vladivostok. The population is about 154,000 people. See <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/620410/Ussuriysk>>. Accessed 18 December 2009.

¹¹⁵ One of my interviewee mentioned that the level of knowledge may not necessarily be linked to the prestige of a university. For instance, she mentioned that the level of students' knowledge at Moscow State University was not very impressive. She said, 'I was examining 3rd year students there [at Moscow State University] and I was shocked... I think the level was very low... I thought "Oh, MSU should be wow! Such a high level!" But no...nothing like it...' (MF3)

Eventually, she became a director of this centre. Another interviewee established a centre with the help of her course-mates from university:

And, of course, within several weeks or so I realised that I could not rent [an office space] on my own, and that it was better to combine efforts with people with whom I went to school, because the rent was extremely high. About US\$5000 a month... So I called a couple of girls who studied with me... All these girls were wives of Russian nouveau riche. So this wasn't really much money for them but still it was pretty good for me to work with someone.

(MF5)

For this interviewee, studying at a prestigious university (Moscow State University) meant that she had class-mates who could afford sharing the high cost of renting an office and although they only stayed together for a few months and then she ended up being on her own, it was still a better way to start for her. The role of (school) networks in career prospects has been discussed by many scholars, and the 'old boys' network' was a cornerstone in the understanding of men's advantages in professional advancement: male networks provided them with access to support, resources and career growth (Gamba and Kleiner 2001; Simon and Warner 1992). In my study, women also seemed to use this opportunity of networking to their advantage. However, it is also evident that there were better networking opportunities for those studying for additional university degrees since people on these courses were older (than those who pursue an undergraduate/first degree) which meant that they were better off financially and socially. Thus, although a university education may not have been a means to acquire professional knowledge *per se*, it certainly provided the women with the opportunity to use it as a means of accumulating social capital for future work advancement. Those who were planning to pursue a career in this field saw this perfectly well and in a way played by the rules. The choice to return to higher education then was the result of the interplay of economic and social opportunities and constraints. As I show below, the choice of *psychology* as a second degree was a no less complicated venture.

Why Psychology? The Female Face of Reason

As I have already mentioned, the majority of counsellors said that they had long been attracted to psychology. However, the routes through which they came to it were quite

different. There are several studies on the motivation for the choice of psychotherapy and counselling as a career (Faber et al. 2005; Murphy and Halgin 1995) and some of their findings are consistent with mine (e.g. in my sample people also cited such reasons for doing psychology as willingness to help, interest in exploring people's behaviour, personal therapy experience etc.). However, the studies named above mostly focused on individual and/or psychological reasons and rarely accounted for cultural and gender factors. As I show below, in the case of my interviewees it was usually a complex combination of personal and structural reasons which were often interdependent.

Three main explanations for the choice of a psychology degree emerged from my data. One was better financial prospects (this I have already discussed earlier in this chapter). About a quarter of my interviewees said that getting into psychology was a sheer accident and the rest cited various 'personal reasons'. As I argue below, often it was not just one reason that dominated one's choice but a bundle of causes. These reasons varied according to whether psychology was their first or second degree and were also shaped by gender.

Just an Accident?

About a quarter of my interviewees mentioned that they got into psychology 'purely by accident' and claimed it was just a concatenation of circumstances, luck or chance. But to what extent was their choice really accidental? Two of my interviewees did not intend to get a psychology degree but were sent to study it by the organizations where they worked at the time:

I was working in a school at that time. Once our principal brought me a newspaper and said: 'Look, that's the kind of specialist which we lack here: a psychologist'. So there I was... (MF15)

This instance (as well as the other interviewee's situation) took place in the early 1990s and suggested that to keep the job in their organization these interviewees needed to comply with the demands of their employers and change their specialisation, even though for the above-quoted participant it meant that for five years she had to work five days a week and study at the university at weekends. On the other hand, it showed that the interest in psychology at the time was growing and organizations (schools especially) were interested to get this 'new' kind of specialist. Moreover, since the majority of school

teachers in Russia are women (Long and Long 1999: 177) it meant that potentially many of them got a chance to re-train at state expense.

Two other 'accidental' cases were the two women who got their education before the 1990s. Both had psychology as their first degree:

I went to university straight after school and to be honest, when I enrolled I had a very vague idea what I was getting into... (MF12)

Another woman was not accepted into an archaeology department due to her medical condition and accidentally ended up in psychology:

So there I was crying for two days but then I thought that I had to study somewhere. I desperately didn't want to work... [laughs] But when I snapped out of my misery the application deadlines for almost all the faculties had gone and the only thing that was left was psychology... So I went there. That's basically how I happened to get into psychology. I don't regret it for a minute! (MF14)

Both of these women eventually became very successful and highly recognised professionals in their field. However, these examples highlight some of the issues with the choice of one's first university education. Many young people do not know what they want to study but since in Soviet times higher education was often 'valued for its own sake' (Jones 1994; Roberts et al. 2000: 69) many still chose to enter universities (and enter those specialities which have easier examinations as in the case of my interviewee, discussed in the previous section).¹¹⁶

So indeed, it seemed that some instances of choosing counselling as a career were close to 'accidental'. However, interestingly, only female interviewees reported being in psychology by accident. I would suggest that the choice of speciality is not least determined by the image of the future career in a certain occupation and this choice is gendered. For example, many of my female interviewees stated that psychology offers only vague career prospects:

¹¹⁶ In fact, according to surveys, about 66% of the Russian population admit the absolute value of higher education. About 88% of people think that higher education is extremely important for both career and personal development. However, 33% of graduates do not work in the speciality for which they were trained. (Statistics portal at <http://statistika.ru/obraz/2007/11/28/obraz_9416.html>. Accessed 15 December 2009.)

Well, this, for one, is a profession which is sort of about everything. Everything, really! I mean a psychologist can work almost anywhere in the labour market. So I mean those without any particular disposition towards something or those who don't know where else to go study, they apply to study psychology... The profession is very vague and blurred... I mean those people who apply to a medical university, they realize that at some point of their life they will be curing people – of course there are varieties, but in general they presuppose it... I assume... What is a psychologist supposed to do?... He can be anywhere basically... (MF14)

Psychology is kind of very specific field which you choose if you actually don't know what to do with yourself... [laughs] Because the subject is very vague and God only knows what they teach there in psychology courses! [laughs] (MF1)

The breadth of application of psychology and the lack of clearly designated tasks for a psychologist open up a wide array of possible job routes which one does not have to decide on instantly. On the other hand, as is clear from the above quote, this can also make for a sense of uncertainty about one's future career. I would argue that this 'vagueness' of the potential career route is one of the factors influencing the gender distribution in application numbers. As I have previously discussed (see Chapter 1), the majority of students in psychology are women. Dmitrieva argues that:

Girls are generally more likely to seek education for education's sake, regardless of its connections to the future profession or job. This might be explained by the idea that work for women is not [considered] as important as for men, since men are considered traditionally to be the breadwinners and their salaries to be the basis of the family budget (1996: 84).

Thus, viewed positively, it may be argued that women feel less constrained to follow the linear education-to-job routes. Thus, they are possibly more flexible and willing to take risks in their education. The situation was different for men. To take Dmitrieva's (1996) argument further, against the background of the male breadwinner ideology not only are men expected to provide for the family (while women have more 'freedom' to study), they are also expected to enter those professions where they can clearly envisage their prospective career route and where it clearly leads to success and higher earnings. For

instance, the ‘vagueness’ of the profession was often cited by my interviewees as one of the explanations for the smaller number of men applying for psychology courses. This professional feature is specific to the Russian context, because in many countries, where psychology has well established professional infrastructures, career options open to someone with a psychology degree are quite specific and pre-determined. In Russia the absence of such infrastructure (I shall elaborate on this point in Chapters 4 and 6) makes one’s professional route uncertain:

I mean that this system [of psychology career development in the USA] is quite clear, it’s clear what stages one should pass in order to get closer to a particular financial status. Thus, men understand this system and see clear stages of their career ladder. But, in our country the system is complicated and very confusing. That’s why women take the risk and men don’t [laughs]. (VF1)

This means that it is not only the content of the counselling profession that is constructed as ‘female-appropriate’ which influences the gender distribution (I discuss this in Chapter 5), but the prospective job route is also gendered. The ambiguity of a career route seems to render psychology more ‘appropriate’ for women since under the male breadwinner model men are supposed to envisage a clear career path while women can afford to pursue their ‘accidental’ speciality.

This has several implications. On the one hand, such a gender regime seems to put more pressure on men ‘to perform’ and seemingly leaves women freer in their career choices. As Yaroshenko et al. (2006) argue men take a more instrumental approach to education, i.e. they pursue a specific qualification when they need it for a specific job. Against the background of the male breadwinner model it may be argued that this is not really a ‘free choice’ for men but rather an imposed one. For example, all three of my male respondents seemed to have given a lot of thought to it before choosing to pursue psychology as their second higher education degree and all of them had the clear goal of earning money: ‘I had a realistic view of psychology as a profession, as a means of making a living’ (MM2). In contrast, several of my interviewees mentioned that a lot of women on their course did psychology without any intention of working but rather because ‘they had nothing to do’ (MF7). On the other hand, however, ‘female jobs’ and female career routes continue to be constructed as less important than men’s and are taken less seriously. Moreover, ‘male’ career routes can apparently lead to better employment prospects. Thus, although less pressure gives women choice, what they ‘choose’ is still the less attractive side of the binary in economic terms. As Pascall and Cox (1993: 119) argue, this situation

of less pressure gives women ‘an opportunity to choose an approach to career that is largely denied to men’ and this can be seen ‘as liberating them from any particular version of career choice’. However, I would argue that this is only the case insofar as women see it as such. As I show further along in this chapter, women themselves reproduce this ‘male route’ discourse: they still have a strong idea of what the ‘right’ way to get in and get on with the profession is, and this way is the one of a ‘conventional’ discourse of a career ladder. For now however, I want to emphasize that the absence of a professional infrastructure in counselling and psychotherapy, which contributes to the ‘vagueness’ of the career route, had much relevance for the formation of its ‘female face’.

‘I Couldn’t Find My Own Therapist’: Education as a Means towards Other Ends than Entering the Job Market

A very specific category of reasons for choosing psychology as a profession, especially among those who applied for additional higher education programs, were ‘personal reasons’ which mainly include personal psychological conditions or/and difficulties in the family. At least ten of my interviewees explicitly mentioned that one of the reasons they chose psychology was the situation in their personal lives:

[I]n that same year we had a tragedy in the family: my sister’s husband died. So somehow we had to cope with all that... So actually it didn’t occur to me that I should go to a counsellor but I thought that I should go and study psychology and then help myself and everyone else in the family too... (MF7)

My daughter was born with certain pathologies... We first went to see a psychologist when she had just entered school... At that time psychologists at schools were just teachers who had some qualification up-grade... Really bad quality... So I realised that if I wanted to do something about our problems I had to do it myself... So it was a blessing in disguise so to speak... And I applied to the university to study at the faculty of psychology... (VF7)

I probably had a kind of existential crisis... I think I’m someone who couldn’t find an appropriate psychotherapist to ask for advice, and so I decided to solve my problems by my own efforts. You know this saying: if you want anything to be done properly, then do it yourself... [laughs] (VF8)

The first two female interviewees clearly held themselves responsible for the emotional and physical well-being of their family members. This situation is consistent with the findings of researchers who have investigated the emotional work of women in organisational and family settings (e.g. Hochschild 1985; Seery and Crowley 2000; Strazdins and Broom 2004) and serves as evidence for the argument by that ‘the central role of women in the family encourages them to provide assistance to others’ (Tatarkovskaya and Ashwin 2006: 179). Thus, taking care of their own emotional needs as well as those of their family motivated women to embark on a psychology degree.

Other studies of psychotherapists’ career choice motivation (Faber et al. 2005; Henry et al. 1971; Murphy and Halgin 1995) have also found that the desire to solve personal problems or deal with painful personal experiences can motivate people to become psychotherapists (the idea of the so-called ‘wounded healer’ (see Henry et al. 1971)). However, the situation in Russia was clearly exacerbated by the lack of adequate professional help. One of my interviewees in fact cited her friend who, had she found some appropriate psychological help at the time when she needed it, would not have gone for a degree in psychology:

Well, now that I’ve worked for a long time [as a counsellor] I understand that if at the time when I decided to apply to psychology I had met some decent counsellor and had had half a year’s course of sessions I probably wouldn’t have gone into psychology at all... Because, honestly speaking, I think I came to solve my own problems.^[117] (MF11)

The lack of sufficient psychological help in Russia seemed to be a very prominent reason that led women to choose psychology as their second higher education degree. Another reason was that having therapy is still quite stigmatised in contemporary Russia and is often seen as a sign of weakness (Cote 1998). These preconceptions are still alive (although many of my interviewees claimed that such negative attitudes are waning).¹¹⁸ On

¹¹⁷ Admitting ‘personal reasons’ for entry into the profession is not necessarily a position that specialists in the ‘west’ would take. Murphy and Halgin (1995: 424) point out that in their study of the reasons for becoming a psychotherapist ‘the wish to resolve personal problems or distress’ was reported only by a minority of respondents. It seems that admitting this fact is seen as less problematic in Russia. I would speculate that this may be because the tradition of professional counselling is not as long and structured in Russia as in the western context and therefore the professional rules on how much personal information is or is not appropriate to disclose are not yet very rigid. The lack of quality specialists in the field could also serve as an ‘excuse’ for the personal reasons for entry.

¹¹⁸ Several counselling centres where I interviewed people did not have any signs or names on their office doors so it was impossible to identify what kind of business they ran. When I asked one of the directors why this was the case, she said that they had many ‘elite’ clients who prefer to come to a counsellor anonymously and therefore prefer that the office does not have a large sign on the door saying ‘psychological help’.

the contrary, a university degree has always been seen as a positive and worthy thing in Russia (see Jones 1994). Therefore, as was emphasised by this interviewee:

It is easier to study than to go into counselling yourself... I think that this flow into psychology is due to the fact that instead of finding a therapist we think that we'd better go and study psychology and then we'll figure out what is wrong and we'll solve all our problems... (MF11)

This suggests that studying for a university degree in psychology seemed to provide a more socially acceptable access to 'dealing' with mental health issues than going into therapy. The use of a psychology degree as therapy and as a way to avoid stigma exemplifies that the choice of this university education in Russia was not always related to 'educational' purposes *per se*.

There were yet other examples of the non-labour-market related reasons for undertaking a degree. For instance, according to my interviewees psychology degrees were used as an additional tool for professional advancement in other spheres:

Some people get this additional higher education degree for improving their professional skills, to be more successful in the area where they work at the moment, because whatever profession one's chosen, it includes psychological aspects. (VF2)

A lot of lawyers and economists are willing to get a higher education in psychology. I've noticed there are a lot of them. One time I also noticed that a lot of teachers were willing to study psychology. Sometimes various medical specialists get this specialisation, but at present there are a lot of lawyers. (VF3, Head of Department)

This latter situation seems to be specific to the Russian context. My sample offered no explanation of why exactly lawyers or economists aimed to get a psychology degree because none of my interviewees reported doing psychology for these reasons. However, this cohort of students was specifically pointed out by several of my interviewees who were Heads or Deans of psychology departments. The choice of psychology as a supplement to an existing job may be due to the very existence of the system of additional higher education in Russia and its relative accessibility. It may be yet another proof of the value of education in Russia (see Jones 1994; Roberts et al. 2000) or on the contrary, the

signifier of the devaluation of higher education (since highly skilled specialists needed more than one diploma to get promoted). It is out of the scope of my thesis to pursue this analysis, and it remains a matter for investigation. What I want to point out is that it shows that acquiring a psychology degree may be accompanied by the intention to use the skills gained, but to use them elsewhere outside of counselling.

Sometimes pursuing a university degree (in psychology) can also be seen as ‘a means of social levelling’ (Avis 1983: 199) and/or social advancement. An example of this situation is the presence of one specific category of students in second higher education courses: the wives of the Russian nouveau riche. As many of my interviewees stated, in many universities, especially in prestigious ones, there were a lot of women whose husbands were rich Russian businessmen:

All these girls were wives of the Russian nouveau riche. Our department was packed with those ladies. We had a bunch of rich girls who came to study because they wanted to improve their social status... Now it is not in fashion to be a housewife in those circles, it is cool to be *someone*. And with psychology it is very convenient: she gets one client a month and very proudly declares that she is a counsellor. (MF5)

Thus, according to this interviewee, becoming a counsellor offered the status of a professional. Such motives are yet another proof that the long tradition of education being a social asset in Russia still holds. This also shows that so-called personal reasons for doing a degree may not be as personal as they seem. Embedded in the cultural context, education used for allegedly private reasons still fulfils structural functions of social mobility or the articulation of a professional identity in line with current mores.

This variety of motives for doing a degree in counselling that I have discussed are by no means exhaustive, but they partly explain why mostly women choose to study psychology and why many people who study psychology in Russia never work in the field.¹¹⁹ The majority (22 out of 26) of my interviewees reported that the percentage of

¹¹⁹ It is difficult to say whether this is a specific feature of the Russian context. Graduates in Russia do not see a clear connection between their education and their future career in general (Dmitrieva 1996). This is unlike the structure of the labour market in countries such as for example France, Germany and Spain where one’s training is closely related to one’s job market opportunities. In Russia this may partially be related to the over-education problem that, for instance, the UK graduate market also faces, i.e. when graduates end up doing ‘non-graduate’ jobs (Alpin et al. 1998). Partially it may be a distinctive feature of this profession because for example, the British Psychological Society web page reports that: ‘around 15-20 per cent of psychology graduates end up working as professional psychologists’ (Available at <http://www.bps.org.uk/careers/careers-in-psychology---postgraduate/careers-in-psychology---postgraduate_home.cfm>. Accessed 14 January 2009). A comparison of the reasons why people leave this profession in Russia and elsewhere maybe a useful matter for further investigation.

their classmates most of whom were women who stayed to work in counselling after graduation was on average 10-15 percent. This indicates that psychological education in Russia is still being used for other purposes than entering the job market in the given sphere. In a sense in this profession the system of education seems to fulfil a different function than it was 'meant' to fulfil in Soviet times, i.e. 'to train highly qualified personnel for the national economy' (Avis 1983: 199). As exemplified by my interviewees, psychological education seems to do everything from a status boost to playing a 'therapeutic' role. These 'other' functions seem to be mostly 'utilised' by women, which partially explains the higher numbers of female applicants for psychology courses. This 'alternative' use of university education in a way can be seen as a re-negotiation of the masculine ideals of professionalisation and professional education which are meant to be exclusive and serve to separate specialists from 'laymen' (Moore 1970). However, the picture is complicated by the ways in which this alternative use of professional education was seen by the women themselves.

The 'Right' Reasons?

When talking about the reasons for their professional choice my interviewees were more vocal about some and more silent or/and critical about others which suggests that some reasons for getting into this profession were constructed as 'appropriate' and others were not. For example, it was possible to sense in some responses the overt disapproval of those women who did their degree 'just for fun' or for those who did it for personal reasons:

Here in Moscow there are many other universities where people study psychology because they have nothing to do... There are a lot of wives of rich businessmen... And then of course they don't work after graduation (MF7).

According to my interviewees one of the main 'vices' of those women seemed to be that they happened to use education for the 'wrong' reasons and what is 'worse' - they never made it to the labour market:

There are many wives of 'new Russian' businessmen who have time and money to study but who have no plans to use their education other than at home or something like that. (VF2)

I know that the majority of those who studied together with me at those [professional psychology] workshops work neither in psychology, nor in psychotherapy. They have diplomas, they've taken some qualification improvement courses, but they don't work. Something prevents them... Probably, it's their way of life. They are mostly wealthy people, for example, wives of those who make big money... They visit beauty shops, swimming pools, fitness centres, and psychological courses for ten years and more, but they still say that they are not yet ready to work. There're a lot of such women... So-called 'quasi-psychological' get-togethers [laughs]. (VF8)

Interestingly enough, even those interviewees who mentioned that they had entered psychology for 'personal reasons' and/or had financial support from their partners still were negative about other women who had done the same. The way the counsellors 'redeemed' themselves was to emphasise that they worked and worked hard (in contrast to those 'other' women). This suggests that the psychologists had a specific idea of the 'proper' reasons for getting university education and the 'proper' ways to use a degree. Thus, although Pascall and Cox (1993) argue that alternative motivation for choosing a certain career (and speciality) for women can be seen as liberating, those interviewees who ended up working in the profession did not view non-labour market related entry reasons positively. This suggests that they viewed career choices through the 'male' paradigm and constructed the 'proper' reasons for doing psychology in accordance with the concept of professionalism which, I would suggest, was a 'conventional' one.

As Cavanagh (2003) shows in her study of the professionalisation of female teaching in Canada, the way in which professionalism was seen very much relied on the masculine notion of professionalisation and the same credentials of professional commitment and professional calling were employed to gain credibility in the profession. This was echoed in the accounts of my interviewees. For instance, several women said that this profession was very special and one had to have a 'calling' for it in order to make a 'good' specialist. For example, one of my interviewees said: 'I was dreaming about this job [psychology] even when I was studying linguistics at university...' and later in the interview mentioned more strongly: 'I think psychology was my calling' (MF2). Another one was even more enthusiastic: 'As for why I have chosen psychology... Well, it was my vocation, my calling... That's for sure!' (VF2).

'Commitment to a calling' is portrayed as one of the necessary professional characteristics in the mainstream theory of professionalisation (Moore 1970: 5). Aldridge (1994) shows that the concept of 'calling' or 'divine vocation' was used in church

discourses to 'legitimise' the exclusion of female priests who 'according to the church could not have a calling. 'Calculative secular ambition was treated as wholly inappropriate; purity of motive was demanded' (ibid.: 138). My interviews show that in this female-dominated profession women also employed the idea of 'calling' and used it for the same purpose of exclusion of the 'wrong' type of specialists (those who enter the profession for 'incorrect' reasons, i.e. not a 'calling'). Furthermore this understanding of a profession as a 'vocation' was related to and shaped the way in which many female specialists thought about the (un)importance of financial rewards in this profession (I discuss this in the next chapter). Thus, the traits of the 'masculine project of professionalisation' (Cavanagh 2003) were clearly present in this female-dominated profession. There were yet other reasons which served as a 'push' factor for one category of women but were used as a means of exclusion for the other category. This was exemplified by the discussion of age in the profession.

The Virtue of Age

As I have demonstrated, my participants cited various reasons for choosing psychology as their second profession. There was however one distinct feature of this profession which was not explicitly mentioned as a reason for entry but which, I suggest, was immediately relevant to one's access to the profession and significantly shaped one's career route - the age factor. Only one of my interviewees stated explicitly that her age was a crucial factor for her choice of counselling:

Well, one more reason [for choosing psychology] was my age. I was 40 at the time. You know in our country this age is 'beyond the limits' already... If we take a newspaper with job advertisements the most frequent phrase you see there is: 'Specialist X required. Not older than 35'. The 'maximum' age is 40: there is nothing in the labour market for someone older. I mean, it's like, 40 is considered to be an 'extremely' old age especially for a woman and it is suggested that you probably have to retire, or... you know [laughs]. And a person is forced to leave the labour market because of her age. And as I'm a lecturer, I don't have many social guarantees or a decent salary. So I started to care about my future and my 'old' age... Well, you see if my salary keeps decreasing, I face the question of changing the workplace, and then counselling seemed to be the most appropriate work for me at my age. (VF8)

Specifying the applicant's age or sex in job ads is illegal in the UK. However, in Russia there are virtually no relevant equal opportunities laws. Scholars (e.g. Ashwin 2000a; Bridger and Kay 1996) have demonstrated that gender and age discrimination exist in the Russia labour market. This situation was in fact exacerbated by the emergence of the free market in the 1990s. Kozina and Zhidkova (2006) argue that age discrimination was one of the reasons that many of their female respondents had to change their jobs. The authors further maintain that it was easier for women to find work in a female-dominated profession. The above quote by my interviewee clearly exemplifies that the psychological sphere in this sense represented a 'salvation' since not only is it female-dominated, it is also a profession where age is a benefit:

[O]ur clients are likely to confuse everyday life psychology and professional psychology, they tend to think that a middle-aged psychologist is more preferable than his young colleague... I should say a middle-aged woman has a definite advantage in this profession... That's why it is so attractive for middle-aged women I think. (VF8)

Thus the uniqueness of this profession is that not only was it easier for older women to get an education (due to low academic barriers for additional higher education entry), but being older opened up opportunities for a more successful career. What is usually a disadvantage in the labour market became a valorised professional characteristic. As the proverb, cited by one of my interviewees, goes: 'A psychotherapist is like wine: the older he gets the more expensive he becomes' (MF7).

However, what is a benefit for one, when 'institutionalised', becomes a disadvantage for the other. For example, my younger interviewees complained that it was very difficult for them to start working because their authority and knowledge was constantly questioned because of their age:

Well, it was very difficult for me, when I worked at school. There I was simply directly told: 'Listen girl! What can you possibly tell us here? We know everything without your advice!' (MF3)

Thus, age was seen as a necessary professional characteristic. Although some interviewees said that age was important because their clients preferred senior specialists, the counsellors themselves reproduced the same discourse on age and experience. Cavanagh (2003) in her study gives an example of how the professional association of

female teachers 'institutionalised' the masculine ideal of professionalism. In my study, it was not even necessary to have an organization for this: the women (and men) simply self-administered this norm to themselves and their colleagues. The majority of my interviewees mentioned that age is a crucial element in a counsellor's 'profile'. The fact that age equals experience was seen as obvious:

Oh yes, absolutely, age matters a lot in this profession. Here it is difficult to start when you are 25. You have to have your own life experience. I think that in some countries you cannot get counselling as your first degree, you have to have some other degree first. I think it is a very right thing to do. (MF2)

Of course, when a lady of my age [64] comes to see a counsellor and sees a 20-year old girl... Of course it is difficult for her, but it is even more difficult for that girl because actually this lady is thought by default to know at least 4 times more about life than that girl... But it is natural... It is logical... (MF14)

Although not all of my interviewees 'naturalised' the relationship of age, experience and professionalism, none of them seemed to be too critical of it. This situation has several ramifications. On the one hand, choosing psychology as a second degree in later life can in a way be seen as an attempt or a strategy to tackle age discrimination in the labour market (although it was not always articulated as such). The flip side of the coin, however, was that age came to be seen as an almost mandatory professional characteristic not only by the clients, but also by the specialists themselves and the reproduction of this discourse served as a factor of exclusion for younger women (see Chapter 4 for further discussion). This shows that women do not represent a unitary category and feminisation works differently for diverse women depending on their age, social class and so on; therefore it is not a homogenous process.

Continuing Professional Development: The Life of Constant Learning

So far I have primarily focused on the discussion of university education in psychology and its role for women in the counselling profession. Another crucial part of educating a specialist in psychology is the process of acquiring additional qualifications which are gained through various courses, workshops and training programs held outside of universities. After graduation, psychologists in Russia continue to undergo a colossal

amount of CPD. Usually this involves training in a specific therapeutic approach. As I pointed out in Chapter 1, there are private centres and institutions that provide this training. It is also common that well-known specialists in the field are invited to give workshops. For example, many interviewees from Vladivostok mentioned that specialists from Moscow come to offer professional workshops in Vladivostok. It can be a one-off or a long-term program which involves attending one or several seminars and at the end of which one is granted a certificate.

All of my interviewees (with the exception of one woman who did not work in counselling) said that they undertook numerous professional workshops and training programs. The interesting thing was that these courses did not seem to have the ‘status’ value for the counsellors (as, for instance, a diploma from a prestigious university had):

I’ve been studying every year of my life. I have so many certificates that I could probably paste it over my whole flat as wallpaper... [laughs] but the thing is that no one needs them and many of them are just papers because they don’t mean anything in juridical terms. (MF14)

However, despite the lack of credential value of extra training, the counsellors still treated this kind of education very seriously. Additional qualifications were not treated as a formality because, as I argue below, they were done for slightly different reasons than the mainstream university education. If university education seemed to fulfil various functions not always directly relevant to the process of gaining professional knowledge, additional qualification up-grades seemed to fill the latter gap. In the section below, I explain that there were ‘explicit’ and ‘implicit’ functions of CPD training.

Patching Educational Gaps

So why did the counsellors study so much? In the early 1990s when psychology and psychotherapy courses started to appear in Russia counsellors seemed to take every opportunity to study something new because they had a very vague idea of how to work (see Cote 1998). As one of my Moscow interviewees who started her practice in the 1990s said:

There was no understanding how it [counselling/psychotherapy] should be done. I remember my first attempts to start counselling people... Today I think

of them as extreme amateurism. I'm thinking: 'Oh my God! My poor clients!' [laughs]. It was a complete disaster what I was doing to them! (MF12)

The complete lack of practical counselling skills at that time and the inability of the higher education system to adjust quickly to the needs of the market led to the development and flourishing of additional professional training. According to my interviewees, teaching CPD courses quickly became an independent and quite lucrative market. Since the market of counselling services was growing and the counsellors had practically no skills the specialists attended almost any course they came across. This was true for both Moscow and Vladivostok:

Here [in Moscow] it was somewhat crazy at that time [early 1990s]. People were studying, constantly studying. You came from one workshop and started packing for the next one and it was endless! (MF14).

When psychologists from Moscow started to visit our city, they brought new training, loads of interesting information... I tried to visit all the training they offered. (VF2)

As time went by, the interest in this type of education did not seem to drop. Many interviewees who got their education after 1999 still pointed out that they studied a lot:

I was investing a lot in myself – I was studying all the time, all those seminars and workshops... they are really costly... All those Moscow specialists are very expensive. But this is what you do in this profession. You have to study. (VF7).

Those who started their practice in the early 1990s still seemed to continue to perfect their skills every year. For example, as one of my interviewees with over 18 years of practice said, 'I'm usually enrolled in at least two long-term and quite time-consuming studying projects or programs' (VF1).

One obvious reason for attending various up-grade courses is that the universities provide mainly a very theoretical education (Ivannikov 2006). According to those interviewees who received their psychology degree after the 1990s the situation has improved and there seems to be more training for practical skills in the university's curricula than there used to be (MF12). However, as another interviewee put it, 'I think

here [in counselling] the gap between school education and practical work is bigger than anywhere else' (MF2). Thus, the number of practice-oriented modules at universities was still argued to be insufficient and those that were taught were deemed incoherent:

MK: And why did you decide to take this particular up-grade course?

MF12: Well, at a certain moment I understood that that kind of 'a-bit-here-a-bit-there' education that you get at a university is not good enough... I think... Well, I needed some holistic concept, some understanding, something more coherent than what I know and I felt I needed to go and study at some fundamental serious therapeutic program.

The problem of the gap between theoretical education and practice is not new and is present in other professions, for example, nursing or pharmacy (Becher 1990: 141). In the Soviet Union this problem was partly eliminated by the system of mandatory placements after graduation and apprenticeships (Roberts et al. 2000). Now that this system has vanished, graduates have to invest more money in post-university education in order to get a better job (see Chapter 6 for further discussion on qualifications). Thus, additional qualification up-grades serve to fill gaps in knowledge, to gain actual working tools and professional confidence, and to perfect the self as a 'working tool' (VF1). These reasons already indicate that this type of training is done for different purposes from the initial university education.

Constructing Professionalism

Although there are technically no formal or legal requirements to update one's knowledge in this profession in Russia (see Chapter 6), nonetheless everyone does it. Up-grading one's qualification makes sense in a system of organisational practices where qualifications 'form prerequisites and justification for merit-based systems of promotion' (Evetts 2000: 58). However, most counsellors in my sample had a private practice which was different from an organisational 'career ladder'; moreover, their private practice was not subjected to any system of licensing or formal assessment (see Chapters 4 and 6). So why spend so much money on extra training? I suggest that besides gaining practical knowledge (as explained above) there was another 'implicit' function that the engagement in the CPD programs performed in this profession.

It may be argued that this extra education and expertise advanced their image in the eyes of their clients. In support of this point Boylan (1993: 208), for instance, points out

the higher importance of ‘the status conferred by education, rather than the skills it imparts’. However, as I suggested earlier in this section, many of the certificates apparently did not hold any formal value. Thus this argument relates more to formal (university) education. The interesting thing is that most of my interviewees said that their clients had never asked them for any of their certificates or diplomas:

You know, I have had only one client in my life who was interested in my education... All the rest don’t really care! Of course, when I introduce myself, I speak about it, but it’s a formal part of the talk. Clients don’t give a damn about whether you are a ‘corresponding member’ of the science academy or a ‘working member’ because they don’t really know the difference... They also know that in our country one could easily have about a dozen fake certificates and that you can be whoever you wish on paper. (MF1)

Thus, according to my interviewees engaging in the continuous professional development was mainly for the purposes of gaining knowledge and becoming better specialists. Many counsellors put all their credentials on their business cards and all their certificates on display in their offices (as I could witness during my interviews). Thus, even though the clients did not ask about the certificates they could still see them displayed and this might have a ‘status effect’. But adorning the office walls is not the only function that the certificates and professional training serve. I would argue in the case of my interviewees, aside from gaining knowledge (or, arguably, uplifting their status in the eyes of their clients), the constant process of studying and acquisition of extra qualifications was seen as a necessary attribute of professionalism *per se* and was also perceived as a career progression.

One of the criteria of professionalism cited by Moore (1970) is high educational attainment. Constant education was seen by the counsellors I interviewed as an intrinsic part of their job and therefore a means of mapping oneself as a professional. All of my interviewees talked about the need for constant qualification up-grades:

A psychologist should constantly acquire new instruments, new methods in order to provide the proper kind of counselling. (VF2)

Psychology is a profession where you always have to study, to up-grade your qualification. I don’t remember a single year of my life when I didn’t attend some professional workshop, training or a seminar... Because that’s what this

profession is like. Maybe in other professions it is less important or prominent... (MF14)

The last sentence signifies that some counsellors saw their training process as a distinctive feature of their profession. In this sense the process of extra education fulfils the function of structuring professional boundaries. Furthermore, since upholding professional qualifications was presented as an unwritten norm, complying with this norm was a way of belonging to a professional community (this role of continuous professional training is partly a result of the under-development of the professional infrastructure in psychology, see Chapter 6 for discussion). Moreover, constant communication with colleagues can be a means of professional networking.

What is interesting is that the female counsellors in my sample had as much additional education as the men, if not more. In her study of doctors in Russia Harden (2001) found that after receiving their university degree fewer female doctors chose to gain extra qualifications (even though most of them were free of charge in medicine). Harden argues that this could be due to the difficulty of combining family responsibilities and enhancing qualifications for women. These reasons however, did not come up in my sample. One of the explanations may be that the women in my sample were less restrained by the household responsibilities. The majority of my female interviewees were middle-aged and had grown-up children (only four participants had children aged six and under); several women were divorced (see Chapter 2). However, none of my interviewees actually sought *any kind* of excuse or 'escape' from such extra education; rather, they embraced it. Moreover, some pointed out that women study more than men in this profession:

Well, my personal opinion is... that men, those who do counselling and psychotherapy, prefer to use one basic specific approach. On the contrary, women are more likely to prefer to combine everything... They are inclined to improve their education more often than men do... They study more often than men do... (VF8)

Although the nature of my sample does not allow making wide generalisations because I interviewed only three men, the fact that the women in my sample studied a great deal was evident. As Lidmila (1997: 105) underlines, one of the reasons why training is essential for a counsellor, is that it provides him or her with a sense of self-justification, which is essential to one's sense of self-esteem. Given the historical dominance of men in professional spheres in general, the fact that women have to study more to prove their

expertise and the 'right' to occupy expert positions seems to make sense. Thus, one reason why women studied a lot was in order to prove their professionalism.

On the other hand, getting more education was a way of establishing oneself as a valuable specialist which I suggest in this profession was seen as a way 'to make a career'. One distinctive feature of the counselling profession is that although most people stay at practitioner level all their life there is no very obvious career ladder: one cannot be officially called a junior or a senior counsellor. My participants pointed out that the career structure in this profession is very obscure and moreover, many women did not conceptualise their professional path as a 'career':

I don't treat this profession as a way to earn big money, or to make a career or something like that. (VF1)

As for a career, I can't say that any female psychologist here has built up some fabulous career in this sphere. We should speak about status, rather than about career in this case. (VF8)

However, professional advancement was seen as a crucial part of becoming an expert, becoming successful and gaining satisfaction in one's work:

But I think the main thing that matters for me is my professional progress. I gain new skills, participate in professional communication and this is all very important. (VF3)

Thus, in a way the constant studying and the amount of education in counselling one undertakes functions as an index of professionalism (to oneself and one's colleagues since it was seen as a 'professional norm') and may be regarded as an alternative to career advancement. Moreover, this kind of career advancement is perfectly 'legitimate' for women within conventional gender frames. For instance, as Pascall and Cox (1993: 117) write, 'naked ambition is not a socially acceptable characteristic for women, and they may learn to express themselves in other terms.' In the same vein, Dmitrieva (1996: 86) maintains that '[f]or a long time in the USSR anybody orientated towards climbing the career ladder was condemned and the word "careerist" had a negative overtone. Thus, people in general had a negative image of anybody orientated towards making a career.' Women in the Soviet Union were supposed to have 'just a job', not a career. However, 'professionalism was a source of pride in the Soviet era' (Ashwin et al. 2006: 91). So in a

way in this profession, constant CDP seemed to be a way to uphold professional pride as well as a means to advance in one's career and excel professionally without compromising the ideals of a 'conventional' femininity.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have focused on counsellors' education in Russia and demonstrated that looking differently at the functions of education is crucial in thinking about the advantages and/or disadvantages it brings to women and in outlining the role it plays in the process of the professionalisation and feminisation of an occupation. Through exploring the links between personal motivation and structural opportunities and constraints I analysed how both higher education and additional qualifications were used in a variety of ways and served a number of different purposes for women.

The interplay of contextual specificities (such as the way in which the higher education system works in Russia, cultural attitudes towards education, the persistence of the male breadwinner stereotype) produced a slightly different set of reasons for, and roles of, additional higher education degrees (in psychology) for women and men in Russia as compared to their western counterparts (see Clayton and Smith 1987). For instance, the development of relevant academic infrastructures in the regions and the lack of academic barriers to second/third university degrees in Russia made it easier for (middle-aged) women to change their profession. However, the cost of education combined with the persisting male breadwinner model led to a situation where mainly women were educated as psychologists and mainly at their family's expense which meant that it was only a certain group of women, usually middle-class, who could afford to study.

The specificities of the counselling profession in Russia also shaped the reasons for one's professional choice which in turn impacted on the development of the profession. For some, undertaking a psychology degree was a means to getting a better job or achieving self-realisation. For others it served the purpose of earning higher social status, advancing in other jobs, or/and attending to the emotional needs of the family and the self. These reasons mirror cultural specificities such as the stigmatisation and the under-development of psychological services and professional infrastructure, and the persistence of gender stereotypes that construct women as second-class workers. This interplay of structural and cultural factors also partly explained why not all psychology graduates stay to work in this profession and why mainly women are attracted to studying psychology in Russia. However, the feminisation of the profession was not a homogenous process, because as my analysis shows, what gave some women opportunities (e.g. their age or

class) was exclusionary to other women. Therefore although it may be easier for women to seek jobs in feminised professions due to gender stereotyping or other factors (Kozina and Zhidkova 2006), it is not equally easy for all categories of women.

Finally, exploring the differences in the role of a university degree and continuous professional development courses shows how in the absence of formal professional pillars in Russian psychology, professional norms can still be developed at grassroots level, for instance qualification up-grades came to be seen as a part of being a professional (see Chapter 6 for further discussion). Constant studying also seemed to serve as a way of career advancement for women which was 'compliant' with persisting gender stereotypes. The fact that women used education in 'non-conventional' ways, i.e. not for the purpose of advancing in the labour market, can be interpreted as a means of emancipation from a conventional career route (Pascall and Cox 1993). However, the way the women reproduced the professionalisation discourse and constructed the notion of a professional (e.g. through the ideas of the 'proper' use of a degree and the 'right' reasons for entry into a profession) indicates that the hegemonic stereotypes of what it means to be a professional still operate in this female-dominated profession in Russia.

Evetts (2000: 64) argues that in the analysis of women's careers it is important to take into consideration three dimensions: culture, structure and action. As is clear from my analysis, all three of those factors were crucial in the analysis of my interviewees' education patterns in Russia and the three dimensions together formed a complex picture of women's educational routes. In the next chapter I shall discuss women's entry into the profession and their professional experiences, which as I show, are also shaped by 'culture, structure and action'.

Chapter 4: A Story of Success: The Professional Experiences of Counsellors

Introduction

In this chapter, I analyse the professional experiences of counsellors following their graduation. In particular, I shall consider the differences between and the difficulties of the forms of employment in which the counsellors engage (e.g. private practice, working in a psychological centre, and working in the state sector). I also discuss the interplay between counsellors' professional routes and the state of their professional infrastructure and analyse how the experiences of these professional environments are gendered.

It is a truism, which many of my interviewees confirmed: not all graduates continue working in the field of psychology and counselling following their degree. For those 10-15% of graduates who stay in counselling in Russia, 'qualifications alone do not provide an automatic "ticket" to a successful career' (Crompton and Sanderson 1990a: 85). It also depends on one's ability to actually survive in the labour market. Furthermore, 'women and men appear to take different routes through the professions for which they are qualified' (Glover and Kirton 2006). Various challenges have been identified for women in the transitional labour market, such as discrimination and unemployment (e.g. Ashwin 2006a; 2006c; Kozina and Zhidkova 2006), the difficulties with female entrepreneurship (e.g. Marlow 1997; Roshin 1996), and the issue of multiple jobs (e.g. Clarke 2002; Foley 1997). Focusing on the specific profession of counselling, I unpack the mechanisms through which all of these aspects of the transitional economy shape female professional routes. There are additional challenges for mental health professionals, such as establishing a private practice (Feltham and Horton 2007; Rogers 2004) or charging for services in psychotherapy (Power and Pilgrim 1990; Tulipan 1983), and my analysis of these aspects within the Russian context expands the understanding of the interdependence of these practices and their economic, legal, and cultural context.

I start by outlining how my interviewees entered the profession. I then discuss the three main forms of counsellors' employment - work in public/state sector organizations, self-employment and working in private organizations. I analyse the ways in which my interviewees use jobs in the public sector, and then outline the difficulties of establishing a business in the private sphere, and discuss the ways in which the counsellors deal with the challenges arising in each form of employment. Finally, I consider the issues of earning

money in counselling and finish with a discussion of the silencing of professional difficulties in this profession.

Entry into the Profession

Entry into psychological services is not a path paved with roses in Russia. In the Soviet Union, there used to be a system of mandatory allocation of graduates to various work places (Clarke 2000; Roberts et al. 2000). For instance, the two women in my sample who did psychology as their first degree before the 1990s were both allocated to work in related fields after graduation (a psychiatric hospital and a research academy). The system did not always function properly and there were ways of avoiding placements and/or finding a job through different means (Clarke 1999a; Gerber 2003). Often, as my interviewees said, those placements in this particular profession were rather useless in terms of gaining professional knowledge:

At that time, well, no one needed any counsellors – meaning that there were no vacant places for such specialisation... Me for example, I got into a psychiatric hospital because I had a clinical specialisation. There wasn't really any counselling or therapy there. The maximum that I was allowed to do was to use some classic diagnostic tests and write reports. Actually no one really ever read those reports... Those papers were lost somewhere in between the patient's urine analysis descriptions...

(MF12)

However, it may be argued that even though these placements did not always meet people's expectations, it was a start for many who did not have any other way to secure a job (Horie 2005). After the 1990s, this system of placements ceased and graduates were free to sink or swim in the new market economy. This created a dilemma that was exacerbated for psychologists by the lack of an appropriate professional infrastructure. So how did one get a job? The distinctive feature of my sample was that only two out of twenty-six interviewees actually *applied* for a job after graduation in the sense of filling in job applications, going to interviews and so on. There were two (not always mutually exclusive) ways into the profession: through networks and through an early career start. In this section, I discuss how these entry strategies work and how they are gendered, aged, and classed.

Networks: Outside and Within

About a third of my interviewees found their jobs with the help of their networks. For example, five of my interviewees got their jobs through their fellow students, four women were offered jobs at the university where they studied, and several others made mention of using their networks for professional advancement. Networks play a major role in Russia (see Clarke 2002; Ledeneva 1998). According to the national polls, during the mid-1990s more than half of female respondents (59%) said that they got information about employment vacancies from relatives, friends and acquaintances (Roshin 1996: 67). This significance of networks does not seem to have declined with the years and at least two-thirds of all jobs in Russia are sought through networks (Clarke 2000; Ashwin and Yakubovich 2005).

Using networks as a means of looking for a job is problematic. Tatarkovskaya and Ashwin (2006: 173) argue that the ‘gendered operation of networks is one of the mechanisms through which job segregation by sex and female disadvantage in the labour market are reproduced’. They maintain that searching for jobs through networks does not significantly improve women’s position in the labour market because female networks are of a lower ‘quality’ due to their lower diversity and narrower reach. These findings closely resonate with my own. The jobs that female counsellors offered their contacts were usually low scale ones: for instance, jobs in state institutions that were not very well-paid, or jobs in large private organizations that they did not want themselves. Furthermore, searching for jobs through networks does not ‘subvert social stratification[s]’ (Clarke 2002; Tatrkovskaya and Ashwin 2006: 167; McGuire 2002). My sample shows that networks are not only gendered but also inevitably ‘classed’ and ‘aged’. As I identified in the previous chapter, women (who could afford it) preferred to enter prestigious universities and one of the outcomes was that they were exposed to a network of people with higher incomes and possibly with more effective and extended social connections. Those who were older and who studied psychology as their second degree had better chances of successful networking. This, however, suggests that while female disadvantage is reproduced through the use of networks, certain female advantages can also be (re)produced.

In spite of admitting the low quality of women’s networks, scholars (Tatrkovskaya and Ashwin 2006: 173) argue that at the same time women are more effective than men in helping their contacts into jobs (Ashwin and Yakubovich 2005: 149) and ‘derive more support from networks’ (Tatrkovskaya and Ashwin 2006: 164). I would suggest, however, that a distinction should be made between *inter*-professional (when women working in one occupation help their contacts to get a job in some other occupation) and *intra*-professional

networks (those within the same profession). The question is whether women are as willing and effective in helping their contacts into jobs if the contacts happen to work in the same profession.

When talking about the availability of jobs in the market, at least half of my interviewees (both younger interviewees and more experienced ones) complained that there are too many counsellors nowadays:

Almost every university now has a psychology department! Where do they work I wonder? (MF3)

Well, you know, the market today doesn't really lack specialists, it's stuffed with psychologists and our former students, and I don't really want to lose clients. (VF1)

In the face of such competition personal networking *within* the profession may not always work. In counselling, the question of network support is complicated because people often work individually with clients and helping someone find a job can mean giving away your source of income, for instance if you re-direct clients. A few women talked about re-directing their clients to other therapists but usually to male therapists, and mostly because the client's problem 'required' a male specialist. An 'unwillingness' to provide help was especially noticeable in Vladivostok because it is considerably smaller than Moscow and has a smaller job market. In Vladivostok, even well known and experienced counsellors were not willing to 'share' clientele or even their professional knowledge:

I always see people face such problems... For instance, during the first year of my practice, when I asked my highly skilled colleagues for advice, they usually started to smile ironically, and started to sort of preach, pontificate in a monologue mode, so I could get nothing useful out of it... Our experienced psychologists don't want to breed competitors... That's why they don't readily share their knowledge or experience. (VF8)

This interviewee said that she knew those experienced colleagues of hers quite well and otherwise had a good relationship with them. Thus, when working in the same profession, especially in a smaller city, women did not seem to be willing to create helpful networks and help their female colleagues even with advice, let alone private practice jobs. In the private and public sector organizations women in positions of power (e.g. directors of

psychological centres) reported that they would rather employ a male specialist than a female (I discuss this in more detail in the next chapter). This ‘favouritism’ and the general abundance of female specialists made the competition between women even tougher¹²⁰ and networking weaker. Those women in my sample who got jobs through personal contacts within the profession as a rule got them from their male colleagues. The scarcity of resources (read: well-paid jobs or wealthy clients) in the profession led to a situation where female specialists did not seem to exert themselves to help their female colleagues (even those they knew well) with finding jobs.¹²¹ Female intra-professional networks seemed to be useful only when one was searching for a colleague(s) to start a practice with. For example, a couple of my interviewees started their business together with female colleagues they met at university.

An Early Start: The Same Old Problem

A distinctive feature of my sample was that the participants usually started working as counsellors while studying (which is not as typical in other European countries, for instance in the UK). The majority of my interviewees (19 out of 26 people) started to engage in psychology-related work while they were still at university and these were not internships but often a full-time or a part-time paid job:

I was in my 3rd year and I had already started to work as a psychologist in a public organization - in a social-pedagogical state centre – I worked with children and with teenagers. (MF3, female, psychology as first degree)

I was already working and writing a thesis simultaneously - I worked at the Institute of Family and Childhood. I worked with difficult children and teenagers who were caught using drugs and who had a bad relationship with their parents. At this Institute, I led therapy groups for half a year... (MM1, male, psychology as second qualification)

¹²⁰ An ‘extreme’ example of such competition was given by one of my interviewees (MF9) who came to work as a child psychologist in a new centre that already had a specialist with similar responsibilities. My interviewee reported being blackmailed and harassed by her colleague because the latter was trying to ‘get rid’ of the newcomer by all possible means as she was afraid of losing her job. And this was the situation between two *child* psychologists.

¹²¹ Moreover, as I show in the next chapter, women seemed to see male advantage in this profession as a largely inevitable fact, which in a way left men out of the competition and toughened the competition between women.

This situation was common among both men and women and among both those who did psychology as their first degree and those who studied it as an additional education. However, although all graduates tried to have an early career start, there were differences in the patterns of doing these jobs according to age and education.

The importance of working while at a university seemed to be more prominent for younger psychologists. For instance, the four younger interviewees complained about the difficulties of finding a job after graduation:

MK: Was it easy to find a job when you graduated?

MF3: Well, no, it was not... It wasn't easy. I could go to work for some state children's centre, but I did not want that. And in any psychological centre in Moscow they require some working experience... [psychology was her first and only university degree]

Those counsellors who were directors of psychological centres were not keen on employing young specialists either:

It is better if he or she [the candidate] has some experience in the field because it is not really profitable for us to take a young specialist and train him (MF7, director of the private psychological centre in Moscow).

The requirement to have work experience obviously made it difficult for younger counsellors to secure good jobs, which was exacerbated by the poor reinforcement of the anti-discrimination laws (see Kozina and Zhidkova 2006). In fact, the rate of youth unemployment (including recent graduates) in Russia in 2002 was 14.4%, which was 5.8% higher than the average rate (Horie 2005: 17). Thus, trying to secure work whilst still in education seemed to be a way to deal with the issue of experience because for those who did it, finding a job after graduation was definitely easier:

MK: Was it easy for you to find a job after graduation?

MF9: It was not difficult because I started from that night line I've told you about [she worked as a helpline operator while at university]. My practice turned out to have started before I learned some theory [laughs]. Moreover, while studying, I worked in a kindergarten as a psychologist. So that's why it was not a problem for me to find a job.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, not only having work experience, but also having *life* experience was considered something of an unspoken job requirement for a counsellor. Therefore, trying to establish private practice when young (which suggested a lack of life experience) was not an option for most young counsellors, as it was very difficult to get clients. As a consequence, younger counsellors mainly had their first jobs in state institutions, for example as psychologists in kindergartens, state centres, or schools where they worked with younger clients or those who did not have an opportunity to choose a counsellor, for instance patients in dispensaries.¹²² These jobs however, were poorly paid. Furthermore, considering the lack of male specialists in the profession securing work experience seemed to be more important for young female counsellors since a young man had the chance of being employed by a centre despite the low level of qualification (as I explain in Chapter 5).

The older graduates in my sample (undertaking psychology as their second university degree) also tended to start work while studying. However, because of their ‘age advantage’ they usually preferred to start in private counselling:

While I was studying at the Moscow State University, I got lots of other additional qualifications. I’d already started counselling. I didn’t have any difficulties with it and I didn’t have any breaks between finishing university and starting my work. (MF13)

Thus mature women did not only seem to have a smoother transition from schooling to work, but also an early start was an additional asset for them. For younger counsellors an early start was almost a necessity. Moreover, this ‘early start’ strategy was also a means of professional networking which could help to secure a job (e.g. stay and work at a given place or get a job through contacts gained). This meant that mature women who usually had a chance to get a better first placement, for example at a university, had yet another advantage. Thus, the kinds of jobs undertaken while studying and the significance of such placements for one’s career development varied among my interviewees according to their age and according to whether psychology was their first or second (additional) university degree. There was also a difference between the kinds of specialisation that men and women chose to pursue which I touch upon in the next chapter.

In the western context, independent or unsupervised counselling without having completed the necessary qualification is not common because it can be illegal as well as

¹²² Alternatively, young people could work for HR departments, which was quite common among my younger interviewees. These jobs were usually better paid but they were not directly related to counselling, therefore did not provide valuable counselling experience.

against the professional ethical code. This situation is different in Russia because of the absence of strict ethical and legislative regulations and the lack of professional infrastructure (as I explain in Chapter 6). However, although starting early seemed to be a necessary measure for many and technically not prohibited by the professional regulations, this situation has several implications for the image of the profession. First of all, 'early' counselling is often practised on one's friends and acquaintances which raises further ethical issues:

There was no system [in the legal job regulations] at all at the time, and of course my first clients were my acquaintances... Of course, that wasn't anywhere near professional counselling... It was at the level of first trials and first errors... (VF2)

Early unsupervised counselling inevitably affects the quality of services; it can also lead to the persistence of the image of the profession as an informal interaction (because it is a 'chat' between friends) which can be one of the factors contributing to its devaluation in the eyes of the general public. This, in fact, was one of the concerns articulated by my interviewees. About half of them said that at some point in their life they encountered a client who had had a bad experience with an inexperienced counsellor. To give my interviewees their due, not all of them started or approved of counselling without having appropriate prior experience under supervision. However, those who did, did not see it as a problem. Their 'excuse' was their life experience:

I don't have any doubts that my experience and my knowledge are sufficient. I mean I feel that I'm not worse than any experienced psychologists who's been doing it for years. I think it is because my life experience is quite successful... (MF13)

By virtue of their age, specialists could escape the accusations of a lack of professionalism as they could always point to 'youngsters' who were to blame for inadequate services:

[There is] a lot of inexperienced young blood that are willing to try out their skills in counselling... They are ready to use all the methods they have just learned right away without knowing a lot of things, and their clients are likely to get negative results from such work... (VF3)

Ironically, this ‘young blood’ they talked about did not seem to include those who had just finished (or were still in) their 3-year second higher education degree, because just by default they did not fall under the category of ‘young’ (in terms of age). Therefore, hierarchies of age within the profession had a significant impact on getting into it. In fact, such age-related ‘protectionism’ expressed by older counsellors may be seen as a mechanism of professional gatekeeping since counselling is almost the only profession where older women happen to have some advantage. However, this focus on the individual’s (un)professionalism determined by age, prevented many from recognising the flaws in the system of system and/or the professional infrastructure (see Chapter 6). The proverbial but mythical ‘bad psychologist’ was often the only one to blame. To summarise, entry strategies into this profession were a product of cultural, legal, and economic conditions and were maintained through the construction of informal professional boundaries.

In the next three sections of this chapter, I discuss the three main forms of employment my interviewees undertook: working in a state organization (e.g. a public sector body such as a school, a university etc); working in private practice (registered or unregistered); and working in a private organization (e.g. a psychological centre, or a private training institution). Since there were only three men in my sample, what follows mainly focuses on and represents women’s perspective, although I do show some gender(ed) differences and dynamics of certain aspects of the counsellors’ employment.

The ‘Uses’ of State Sector Employment

Since the 1990s the number of both men and women working in the state sector in Russia has decreased (Jovanovich and Lokshin 2004). Similarly, working for the state was not the most popular option among my interviewees. The primary reason for people’s unwillingness to work in state organizations was the low salary:

I don’t know how it is in other countries but in Russia if you work as a psychologist in some governmental institution like in a state counselling centre or school your salary will be very small. Extremely small! (MF2)

There is very high staff turnover there [psychology nightline]. People work for two months and leave... because they are paid 5800 roubles [about £120] a month...And that’s in Moscow! (MF14)

Indeed, the surveys show that in Moscow in 1997, the overall wage gap between the state sector and the private sector for women was 18.3% (Jovanovich and Lokshin 2004: 108). State sector employment was especially disdained by those who had psychology as their second university degree. Once women had invested significant resources in their education and additional qualification, they considered working for the state a waste of time and money:

MK: So you did you not have a desire to work for a state organization?

MK13: State organization? Oh, please! Spare me [laughing]. At my age?! I've been working for our state for long enough! Of course not! Then why would I spend such incredible amounts of money on my education? Do you know how much it actually costs? ... A vast amount of money! (MF13)

Thus, if younger women still had to resort to working in the public sector at the start of their career (for the reasons given in the previous section), those who were older were in a better position to 'escape' this form of employment. However, more than half (14 out of 22) of my older interviewees kept jobs in the state sector. The most popular work was university lecturing (nine interviewees) and working in medical institutions (three interviewees). The question then is, if for some there was an opportunity to 'escape' working for the state why did they keep those jobs?

All men in my sample also reported working in the state sector (usually as lecturers), but they were not as eloquent about the reasons why (although one mentioned the importance of the intellectual engagement and the need to earn). As for women, the reasons seemed to vary. McMahon (1994), for example, argues that women were more likely to keep state sector jobs at the beginning of the transition period because they were usually more dependent on welfare benefits and less willing to take risks. Clarke (1999: 180), however, found that women were not in fact significantly more concerned about social benefits than men (except for childcare). As polls show, the idea that the state should be responsible for women's welfare and well-being was only supported by 30% of women in 1999 compared to 72% in 1991 (Egorova 1999: 45). This means that the majority of women do not, and do not want to, rely on the state. In my sample, there was only one woman who said that social benefits kept her in state organization (she was a lecturer at a

military academy and was eligible for all military benefits¹²³). In other state sector organizations, the benefits were so minimal that women did not seem to rely on them at all. Working there was more for a sense of psychological security:

Probably, this idea is very stereotypical and out of date... But it seems to me that working in a big organization can give you more certainty in your life, provide you with some social guarantees, benefits and welfare... (VF4)

The same interviewee also pointed out that she earned the main part of her salary through conducting qualification up-grade workshops and that the university was mainly there to give her peer support:

But I mean that my job at the university is some sort of a social element of my life – it is mainly for support, communication with colleagues... (VF4)

Thus, gaining social benefits did not come across as the main reason for working in the state sector (not least because they were really low), but the psychological security of the state institutions still had a certain influence on women's decisions, which is quite understandable in a situation of uncertainty and unpredictability such as characterises transitional economies (Busse 2001).

There were other reasons why the counsellors kept state sector employment jobs. For instance, those who did not have their private practice officially registered (I come back to this question later in this chapter) kept jobs in order to have a formal employment record:

Well, you know that according to the Labour Code you have to be officially registered with some organization so you have your work record book^[124] and only then can you have your pension saving... If they [the company she worked for] have any issues they can use my services and in return I can have an official place to keep my labour record book. (MF2)

¹²³ The military system still provides considerable social benefits. My interviewee for instance cited such benefits as free childcare facilities, a right to travel once a year to any part of Russia by any means of transportation for free, a right to get a flat, annual monetary bonuses and so on.

¹²⁴ Every person who starts working in Russia is issued with a so-called 'work book' or employment record book (*trudovaya knizhka*). It contains the record of a person's employment history: dates of employment, reasons for changing jobs, information about promotions and rewards, as well as penalties and sanctions for misbehaviour, etc. The work record book is issued regardless whether one works for the public or private sector (but not in the informal sector). Work records are used to determine one's pension.

This woman earned most of her income through private practice but needed an official job record.¹²⁵ This reason is consistent with the findings of other studies of employment in Russia (e.g. Clarke 2002).

Finally, the counsellors kept jobs in the public sector because those jobs represented a (re)source in terms of professional networks. For instance, this interviewee openly acknowledged that although she was getting a minimal salary she worked at Moscow State University for a while to increase her status and establish professional networks:

I asked to stay at the Department of Psychological Counselling at Moscow State University. I was hired for the position of junior researcher for a year – my official salary was 872 roubles a month [about £20] ... [laughs] – it was a part-time job... But here it had nothing to do with the wage! It had to do with the opportunity to get into the market. So in a career and career development sense I did this deliberately. I wasn't going to work there. (MF5)

Working at a university or in a medical institution also provided a 'source' of clients. For instance, most of those who worked in the universities reported that they often 'recruited' their clients from their former students (especially those older students who took psychology as their second degree):

For example, our former students from the faculty of supplementary (second higher) education [choose to go into therapy]. Sometimes they become our clients if they have deep, long-neglected problems. (VF3)

And very often our individual clients are mostly our students, studying at family therapy programs... their relatives and acquaintances. (VF4)

In ethical terms, within the western context, this may be regarded as unprofessional. However, in the absence of a developed professional infrastructure, for some it was one of the few effective ways of getting clients. Thus, it seemed that many women used state organizations rather pragmatically. However, the reality was also that one could often not afford to work in the state sector alone mainly due to low salaries. Thus, all of my interviewees who worked in the state sector had other jobs. Usually these were jobs in the private sector.

¹²⁵ For the same reason some of my interviewees kept jobs in large private organizations (e.g. as an HR consultant in a construction company).

In Search of a Leather Couch: Individual Private Practice

The idea of ‘psychotherapy’ conjures up an image of an office with a leather couch and a bearded psychoanalyst. Indeed, the therapists I interviewed too had this fantasy:

What did I dream of? [Laughs] Well, I imagined myself sitting in my office in a leather armchair with a palm tree plant beside me [laughs]. I imagined myself seeing clients, and I imagined crowds of clients sitting in leather armchairs in the reception room craving my consultation [laughs]... But in reality the situation turned out to be very different. I don’t have a palm tree [laughs]... Yet... [Laughs]. (VF8)

In the western context, private practice is a historically common form of employment for counsellors and psychotherapists. Most of my interviewees were also seeing private clients. However, only seven had *registered* their private practice officially (one man and six women). The rest worked ‘informally’, and even those who had registered their business occasionally saw clients at home. So why was private practice, which is almost a norm in the west, so difficult to organize in Russia? As my data show, there were legal, economic and professional obstacles that prevented many from working ‘legally’.

Setting Up in Business: Private and Individual

In Russia the private sector *per se* only started to develop after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Ageev et. al. 1995). At the beginning of 1990s, the number of women entrepreneurs was about 20% (Roshin 1996: 89). The psychological profession by its very nature allows practitioners a good opportunity to establish a private practice. Working independently with clients and/or groups was one of the major sources of income for many of my interviewees. However, apart from pecuniary incentives, there were other reasons why counsellors preferred private practice.

The studies on women and entrepreneurship (Davidson and Cooper 1992; Mallon and Cohen 2001; Marlow 1997) shows that there are several main push/pull factors which make/let women choose self-employment, for instance, dissatisfaction with wages, a lack of career opportunities, the need to combine family and work, a desire for autonomy, discrimination at work, etc. In a way, all of the above reasons more or less shone through the accounts of my participants although some of these reasons, for instance discrimination, were not often articulated as such. One of the most frequently cited reasons in favour of private practice was the desire to work independently:

The thing is you have to abide by very strict rules [when working in an organization]... You have to fulfil somebody else's requirements and decisions, which I used to consider not necessarily very logical, or smart. But when I am a freelancer I am my own boss and I determine for myself what to do in life. It is very important for me to have freedom of choice in life, freedom of decision-making. (MF4)

Striving for autonomy is a rather typical motivation for starting up one's own business (Marlow 1997; Roberts et al. 2000). In their study of female entrepreneurs Mallon and Cohen (2001: 224) found that women's desire to become an independent entrepreneur was largely triggered by their aspiration to *further* advance their opportunities. It is interesting to note that for my interviewees it was foremost a desire to escape the ignorance of employers and to have at least *some* opportunity of development. According to my interviewees, most employers simply do not understand what a psychologist is actually supposed to do:

The demands made of them [of psychologists] are so indefinite and vague that it is impossible to fulfil them! I mean that the boss's attitude towards psychology differs from what a psychologist is actually able and ready to do... Bosses want ... Well, they don't know what it is exactly that they want but they want everything to change for the best at once. (VF3)

Furthermore, not only did low psychological literacy among company managers lead to false expectations from psychologists, but it also meant that their skills were not perceived as valuable enough or worthy of consideration, which made the working environment very difficult¹²⁶:

These psychologists [who work in private organizations] are placed in such uncomfortable conditions... Their initiative is met with suspicion or

¹²⁶ It may come across as a contradiction, that on the one hand the majority of counsellors said that the level of psychological literacy among people has increased (see Chapter 1), but on the other, they kept talking about situations where people had no idea what psychologists' services were or how they were supposed to be used. However, there is no reason why this inconsistency cannot exist. First, although the counsellors reported that, compared to the level of people's psychological knowledge in the early 1990s, people indeed knew more in 2008-2009, they did not claim that their clients were as literate as they wanted them to be. Second, knowledge is not equally distributed among people and it is not surprising that some counsellors met clients or employers who knew less about psychology than others. The level of literacy, for instance, could depend on the location: people seemed to be better informed about psychological matters in Moscow than in Vladivostok. Finally, the level of knowledge about the kind of services psychologists provide can vary from one sphere to the other, i.e. people may be aware of what to expect in family counselling, but have no idea about the duties of an organisational psychologist.

mistrust... I mean that a director thinks that he knows everything and he can tell all the specialists what to do, in all spheres, *especially* in psychology. And this suffocates me - that there's no respect in the general attitude towards the status of our profession and towards the specialists of this sphere. It's better to be an independent professional... (VF8)

Thus, becoming a freelancer was also a 'battle' for the recognition of one's professional skills. This battle however, seemed to be gendered. For instance, my male interviewees who had worked in the private sector did not report similar experiences of having their professionalism doubted, even if their employers did not exactly know what a psychologist is supposed to do. Thus, they may have been seen to have more expertise than the women just by virtue of their sex, which is consistent with other research in the area (see Davies, C. 1996).

Therefore, going private or freelance was in a way a 'coping strategy' for women (Marlow 1997: 200) even though they did not articulate it as such. Studies of American counsellors show that women counsellors who work in organisational settings report more exhaustion than those in independent practice (Rupert and Kent 2007: 95). My sample did not provide any similar evidence of who was more satisfied with their working conditions. However, my data showed that not everything went smoothly when establishing one's private practice either. In fact, it was quite difficult to 'cope' with this 'coping strategy'.

Taxes, Rent and Clients

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, one does not need any licence to practise counselling in Russia:

Here in counselling there is nothing – neither mandatory nor voluntary licensing – only psychotherapists are required to have a license because they are medical workers, and psychiatrists. (MF5)

Moreover, psychological counselling is not even a separate item in the index of economic/entrepreneurial activities¹²⁷:

Right now psychologists are in the category of 'other individual services' which consist of astrologists, escort services, window cleaners,

¹²⁷ Russian Classification of Economic Activities and Products, OK-00493 (2002). Available at <<http://nalog.consultant.ru/doc36623>>. Accessed 10 March 2009.

psychologists and such like – that's according to the Russian registry of economic activity! (MF5)

There are, however, regulations on private entrepreneurship, so technically if a psychologist charges money for services on a regular basis then s/he is required to pay taxes and in order to do that s/he needs to register as an individual entrepreneur. As shown by Kihlgren (2003: 199) setting up a small business in Russia can take on average about three months and involves obtaining up to 50 permits and approvals from various authorities. Moreover, high taxes, few financing opportunities available for small businesses, high levels of corruption, vague legislation, an under-developed entrepreneurial culture and lack of experience are just a few of the obstacles in the long list of those pertinent to the Russian context (Ageev et al. 1995; Kihlgren 2003; Safavian et al. 2001; Zhuplev et al. 1998). Most of the above-mentioned issues related to setting up in business were mentioned in the interviews. This was further complicated by the difficulty of earning good money in counselling.

Official registration usually means renting an office and paying taxes. Practically all of my interviewees who rented offices pointed out that the rent was too high. For example, the rent for a property with five separate rooms in central Moscow was as high as RUB 150000 (about £3300) a month – this figure was reported by one of my interviewees who was trying to set up a centre in 2004 (MF5). The lack of recognition of the specific needs of this business by governmental policies was cited as a major problem by counsellors both in Moscow and in Vladivostok:

You know now it doesn't matter whether you do some oil business or psychotherapy – the taxes and the rent are the same. As an entrepreneur I'm paying the same taxes as those who make loads more money than I do... We are just like any other business... And this is in spite of the fact that my profession is totally different... (VF7)

Thus, high rent made it even more difficult to 'survive' the early period in one's career, when the client pool was not established yet and one had to invest a lot of money in training (see Chapter 3). This meant that it was important to have personal start-up capital to 'survive' at the beginning of one's career. Research on women and entrepreneurship shows that it is more difficult for women to secure funding for starting up their business and that women mostly rely on their personal funds (Marlow 1997: 206). Moreover, in Russia banks do not tend to support small businesses in general (Kihlgren 2003). This was reflected in my sample as none of my interviewees who had an (official) private practice

actually got or tried to get a loan. Furthermore, the economic situation was not regarded as stable enough to risk this:

At the moment I'm interacting with all these governmental structures and offices as I'm trying to set up my business, and I can say that they do not do anything for you 'willingly'... It's difficult to buy or to get some decent property for lease. It is hard to get credit and it is quite scary because you don't know what's going to happen next in this country...
The situation is very unstable. (MF8)

However, even if counsellors could secure start-up capital, in order to pay high taxes and rent, they had to have a stable client flow to support their business.

But the client flow was unstable, partly due to the general economic situation and the fact that these services are not an urgent necessity:

You see, psychological services, it's not something that a person would want to get on a first-priority basis. Like, I think in 1998 we had a very hard period. In that year...it was really hard, there was nothing to eat, there was no money, and loads of people lost their jobs! So who needed a psychologist at that time? Maybe some did, but we - psychologists - are not a necessity, but a luxury of a kind... (MF5)

Getting clients was also much more of an issue in a smaller city such as Vladivostok than in Moscow. Thus, the income, especially of those who were just starting to practise, was quite arbitrary and the nascent private counsellor ended up in a vicious circle:

Rent payments are really very high... It was a dilemma... In order to pay such rent, we needed a rather high number of clients... But we had just a few clients, so we couldn't afford the rent... And it's better when you see your clients in an office, of course... I mean a convenient large room in the centre of the city makes it more likely for people to come, because it implies services of a high level and can affect people's attitudes and the level of fees... The problem that we faced was that of start-up capital.
(VF8)

Thus, if counsellors at the end of the day decided to take the risk of setting up in private practice, getting clients was a major concern. This was also exacerbated by the issues with advertising one's services.

Advertising Services

Any textbook on psychotherapy and counselling, be that in the UK (e.g. Woolfe et al. 2003) or in Russia (e.g. Nemov 2008; Linde 2009), will tell you about the ethics of treating clients, and ways of enhancing one's professionalism. However, dealing with practical issues has not been a focus of attention until recently. Recent psychotherapy handbooks in the UK (e.g. Feltham and Horton 2007) mention some issues regarding starting up a private practice, including the problem of expanding one's client pool. In Russia this problem is even more complicated due to the lack of a clear legal framework and the absence of any kind of unified registers of mental health professionals.¹²⁸ Therefore no handbook will tell you where and how to get clients. In the absence of any guidelines for advertising, my interviewees used a range of ways to market their services. For instance, quite a few specialists mentioned that they advertised online. In fact, 13 out of 17 interviewees in Moscow mentioned that they had a webpage. The main advantage of internet advertising was that this method was cheap and effective:

MK: So how did you advertise your services?

MF7: It was mainly through the internet – first of all because it is cheap and a lot of time free of charge. Another benefit is that all the information stays there all the time and it is better if you compare it with magazines...I mean people read them and throw them away and advertisements there cost loads of money!

The use of online advertising was different in Moscow and Vladivostok, which ties in with the question of access to resources. In Moscow, searching for a psychologist online was very common, therefore setting up a webpage was a cheap and effective way to promote oneself. In Vladivostok, barely anyone advertised online and two women who did reported its very low utility. This resonates with the fact that I could not find any contacts in Vladivostok through the internet as opposed to Moscow (see Chapter 2). In Vladivostok, the more effective way to advertise was to have information on directory phone lines (for which one had to pay). Those who worked in universities had the possibility to advertise among students.

¹²⁸ In the UK for example there are directories of professionals issued by the UKCP (United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy), the BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy), the BPS (British Psychological Society), the BPC (British Psychoanalytic Council) which ensure that each specialist listed there has an appropriate qualification, licensing etc. In 1998 the BPS issued 'Guidelines on Advertising and Services Offered by Psychologists' (Feltham and Horton 2007).

But the most (and often only) effective way of getting clients in both cities was through word of mouth, in other words through recommendation from relatives, friends or acquaintances. The majority of my interviewees (20 out of 26) said that this was their main strategy. It was an effective way for both individual (male and female) practitioners and for larger psychological centres:

It's a kind of net marketing – you learn about it, and then inform others [laughs]. I mean that information about our services is spread by word of mouth^[129]. In my opinion, this way is more effective than some TV or radio advertisements.... (VF4, individual practitioner)

Then again, the best commercial for us is word of mouth – someone liked the counsellor and then he or she is going to tell friends about it and so on... (MF7, director of the psychological centre)

In a way, such a way of 'advertising' may seem as a rather passive approach to promoting oneself. However, considering the cultural context it is not surprising that it is the most effective. As many scholars point out (Clarke 2000; Ledeneva 1998, Lonkila 1997), in the Soviet Union in the light of permanent shortages, networks were 'vital to secure access to basic items' (Ashwin and Yakubovich 2005: 150). This related to everything from consumer goods to services. Furthermore, it related to ensuring the *quality* of services. Even though most services and goods are now available on the Russian market and often 'with enough money, there are few problems that cannot be solved' (Busse 2001: 16; Ashwin and Yakubovich 2005), the question of the quality remains:

I mean in Russia it is done in the good old way – you have to search among your contacts... You start asking around about everything – 'Do you have a good car mechanic?' or something... Because there are tons of advertisements but you never know what kind of shit you'll put your foot in... You never know! And the same with counsellors. It is hard to find a good one... (MF10)

Feltham and Horton (2007: 194) point out that in UK practice 'most referrals come by word of mouth from satisfied clients and their networks', but other ways of advertising

¹²⁹ An interesting detail is that in Russian the phrase 'word of mouth' is *sarafannoe radio*. This comes from the word *sarafan* – a type of old Russian female outfit - something like a pinafore. The connotation of the concept comes from the assumption that women talk and spread news and gossip.

are also possible. Clients may, for example, be referred by other health practitioners (e.g. GPs) or search a list of accredited professional bodies for suitable therapists or access other services directories. For my sample, such an advertising infrastructure was absent. There is no system whereby a GP refers a person to a psychologist because the latter is not part of the medical infrastructure (although s/he might make a recommendation). Professional organizations do not have lists of their members available (see also Chapter 6). Advertising in Yellow Pages or other directories and printed sources (e.g. newspapers, magazines) was also seen by the counsellors as useless which was partly due to the absence of ethical and legal guidelines for advertisements in the press and media. In the UK, for instance in the Yellow Pages, there are no standards that a professional should meet. However, the BACP Ethical Framework states that information about professional services should be accurate and honest in order not to mislead the public (Feltham and Horton 2007: 195). My interviewees said that in Russia, clients pay little attention to ads in printed sources because in the absence of regulations anything from palm-reading to physiotherapy could be advertised under the label of ‘psychological services’. As one of my interviewees commented:

For example, you buy a newspaper with ads and you’ll have 25 pages of various medical centres there. But they have such mysterious names and they offer such weird services... For example the ad can read – ‘I’m a psychologist of the highest category’ – well, this in itself is rubbish! There are no categories in psychology – only doctors have categories... Or, for example, you have something like: ‘Specialist removes jinxes and the evil eye *and* practises psychoanalysis’... (MF14)

Thus, the importance of relying on word of mouth advertising and one’s networks was augmented by the under-regulation of psychological services. For the same reasons, those who worked in organisational training preferred face-to-face communication with their potential employers:

I have already said that I offered my programs to several centres. The thing is that it is absolutely necessary to come and talk to them face-to-face. Phone calls don’t really work. If you come and show them in person what you have, it works better... (MF3)

This ‘networked’ way of getting clients also inevitably led to a ‘classed’ flow of clients. If one managed to get high-income clients at the beginning then one was better off later. This was clearly exemplified by one of my interviewees who treated VIP clients:

Usually all my clients are successful people... Well, just now I had a girl who is the head of a law firm. And since I don't advertise myself in any way and my phone number just goes from one person to the other, so it happens that I have clients of this particular level mostly. (VF7)

Many women, however, did not recognize this pattern and attributed it mostly to a person's luck or better working conditions (e.g. having an office in a good location, which could also be a contributing factor to the social level of the clientele).

Because finding clients through networks was seen as the most effective way, it was, predictably, reproduced as 'normal'. For instance, my interviewees could be roughly grouped into two camps – one group of counsellors said that finding clients represented a major problem. A closer look at this 'less fortunate' group showed that it was comprised of younger people and of those who had just started their practice. The other 'camp' claimed that getting clients was not difficult at all. Those were usually senior counsellors who had connections in 'elite' circles or who got clients from the pool of their students or patients. However, both 'camps' seemed to see the situation as normal or/and inevitable. Therefore, the complaints from the younger cohort were met with a touch of professional arrogance among older counsellors and the issue of finding clients was constructed as an exclusively personal problem:

But today in Moscow I think only someone who doesn't *want* to work has no work, has no clients. Well, of course when people start working right after they graduate from the university, then of course it takes some time to start, to earn your name so that people know you... (MF14)

This normalisation prevented counsellors from questioning the possibility of a structural problem with clientele search and allowed them to reinforce the existing patterns. 'It's just the way it is [in Russia]' (MF13) was the usual stance. Such a 'fatalist' attitude was also reinforced by the lack of any help from professional organizations or the government (see Chapter 6). Ease of client acquisition also tied in with the gender of the therapist: men in my sample did not mention this problem and one of the reasons was that they were mostly tokens in the profession and therefore had fewer problems filling their client schedule (I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 5).

Alternative Options?

As I discussed in the previous section, a lack of adequate legislation and funding, high rent and taxes, difficulties of obtaining start-up capital and various problems of advertising one's services made it difficult for specialists to engage in an official individual private practice. So how did counsellors cope with these challenges?

Informal Economy

About a third of my interviewees both in Moscow and in Vladivostok noted that it was almost impossible to survive when working on one's own and doing it legally:

On the state level we have a complete mess with taxes. I mean if you want do everything officially, according to the law, you will never have any profit. (MF2)

If one pays rent and taxes, then in fact, one will suffer losses or at best gain no profits, work with a zero balance... (VF8)

One of the consequences of this situation was that counsellors were pushed into the informal sector. More than half of my sample practised unregistered¹³⁰ at home or rented an office every now and then. The informal sector of the economy is defined as one 'that is not registered in accordance with the law and is carried out individually or at small enterprises that do not pay taxes or do not pay in full' (Khotkina 2001: 25). Researchers suggest that the 'push' into the informal sector may be caused by several factors such as poverty, inefficiency in the formal economy, exclusion from the formal economy, economic crisis and so on (Busse 2001). Research on Russia also shows that the majority of such informal workers are women (Busse 2001; Khotkina 2001: 26).¹³¹ For counsellors the push to work informally was amplified by the uncertainty, complexity and contradictions in the formal legislation (see Radaev 2005) and the fact that licensing was

¹³⁰ By 'unregistered' I mean that they worked in the informal economy. Counsellors do not have to undergo professional licensing/registration, but because they charge money for their services according to the Federal Law on Small Entrepreneurship (http://www.statys.org/zakon_mal_pr.html), accessed 16 June 2009) they have to be registered as small entrepreneurs for taxation purposes.

¹³¹ My data does not allow any conclusions as to whether more female than male counsellors worked in the informal sector as I talked only to three men. One of them did counselling at home; the other two only did sessions in psychological centres. However, the fact that mostly women work in this profession allows an assumption that more women than men work in the informal sector in this profession. As I show in the next chapter the fact that there are fewer men enabled them to have a full client load and therefore allowed more opportunities to rent an office.

not required. Therefore, it was easier for many just to practise at home and save the hassle of trying to establish a formal practice.

A definite disadvantage of the informal sector is the lack of any legal protection (see Szalai 2000). In counselling, this is also exacerbated by the nature of the services. As one of my interviewees said:

Although psychologists work with sane people, you never know who will show up – sometimes we have people who really have some pathology... And they can give you a lot of trouble... (MF11)

Another drawback was that some counsellors did not want or else could not afford to work in the informal economy. For instance, as one of the women in Vladivostok said when I asked why she did not want to work ‘as everyone does’:

My colleague and I are public figures [well-known specialists in the city]. And if we position ourselves as public people and keep hiding under the covers at the same time or having some under-the-table business I don’t find it very respectable... [I]t doesn’t gain trust in the eyes of our clients. (VF5)

In the same vein, although Russians are used to paying for informal services for instance in medicine (Thompson and Witter 2000), nevertheless, keeping the activity informal in a way reproduced its ‘non-professional’ status and complicated the question of charging for services (I discuss this in detail at the end of this chapter). Szalai (1991; 2000) argues that the informal economy was important in sustaining households during the transition and gave women an opportunity to use their skills. Indeed counselling in a private setting allowed women to earn more money. However, the downside of working in the informal sector and the fact that for many it was the only option made such an ‘opportunity’ also a potential dead-end.

Private Psychological Centres

The better choice for some of my interviewees was to work for a psychological centre. At least half of my interviewees mentioned that they permanently (or at least occasionally) counselled in various psychological centres. Working in a centre tackled several issues: it solved the problem of working in isolation, helped to deal with legal matters and attracted clients.

Working on one's own and the problem of isolation in psychotherapy is in fact a commonly articulated concern (Dryden and Spurling 1989; Guy 1987). All of my interviewees (including two men) who worked in psychological centres said that communication with colleagues was of great importance to them. Moreover, working on one's own also meant that one was responsible for all aspects of running a private practice:

Actually I think that a psychotherapist has to be able to do everything. Starting with organisational questions on how to rent an office and where to buy a video camera and finishing with who's going to clean your office after clients leave... You are like a small corporation where you are everything – a director, a manager and a cleaner... (MF10)

Working in a centre helped to deal with organisational, managerial and paperwork problems: 'I counsel in several centres so it is their responsibility to deal with taxes and everything.' (MF2) Centres also attracted more clients because centres seemed to be thought of as more trustworthy:

It is obvious that the population reacts better to an organization or centre, which can advertise itself and so on. People have somewhat more trust in such services. A centre means that money has been invested, a PR campaign has been launched, and there is a website and so on. In this sense, private practitioners lose out. (MM1)

The higher 'trustworthiness' of the centres may be explained by the lack of quality services and quality control in the market discussed earlier. When people cannot find a good counsellor through their networks the next best thing seemed to be to look at bigger establishments, because the fact that the centre is officially registered can provide some guarantee of higher quality services. However, the reality looked slightly different. In fact, the line between a private centre and a private practice was very blurry and often the label 'Centre' was just a red herring:

Well, the 'centre' is more of a formal name for our organization. Our website has this title too. In reality it is not that much of a centre, it is mostly private practice. It's just... it is easier for us to use 'centre' in advertising our services – people react more positively, they trust an organization more. But basically in reality it is a private practice of each member of this centre. (MF9)

It works so that they just rent out a room to you basically and most of their staff, although they work there all the time, they rent the office where they counsel so the agency has their percentage of profit. (MF2)

There is no evidence that the services in the centres were of better or worse quality than in the private/informal setting. But working there definitely eased counsellors' lives. It also meant that one did not have to pay taxes, as renting an office does not require registering as an entrepreneur, therefore saves the hassle. However, here the geographical differences seemed to matter significantly. For instance, in Vladivostok, the popular answer to the question: 'Why don't you want to work for a psychological centre?' was: 'Well, we don't have the real centres in our city to work there...' (VF3). This suggests that since counsellors in Vladivostok lacked an opportunity to work for a centre of any sort, more of them had to resort to informal practice.

Making a Living: Holding Multiple Jobs

Taking into consideration all positive and negative sides of each type of employment discussed above, I suggest that there seemed to be just one solution: one had to have several jobs, each of which 'catered' for specific needs. Indeed, all my interviewees (except two people) were engaged in several forms of employment and had multiple jobs. The usual scheme, for example, in Vladivostok, was to have a job at a university, to have private clients and engage in conducting CPD courses and workshops (which, according to the interviewees, was a rather profitable activity since counsellors constantly study). Working in several jobs was common in both Moscow and Vladivostok.

When asked why they work so much, some said that it was a way to diversify their activities: 'For me – I can't do just one thing...' (MF14). For others it was the only opportunity to earn extra income:

If I only worked as a counsellor [individual] and didn't work with groups as an addition, and didn't write articles, and didn't teach, I would not be able to pay the rent probably [laughs]. (MF4)

The insufficient pay in each individual job that the counsellors did was the most common reason for doing so much work¹³², which is consistent with other research on multiple job-

¹³² When I say 'insufficient' I use this term as my interviewees would use it: because they were middle-class and were not on the brink of starvation, earning 'enough' for them inevitably meant a different amount than for those for a less well-off background. This however, does not mean that they worked less hard or that their work was easier.

holding in Russia (Clarke 2002; Foley 1997). However, I suggest that although the material aspect was the most articulate of all the reasons, the kinds of problems of each sector of employment that I discussed in the previous sections meant that one sector and one job could not provide all the necessary benefits that the counsellors were after. Thus, combining different jobs in different sectors was the only solution.

As Clarke (2002: 61) points out, engaging in supplementary employment ‘is also a matter of the opportunity to have one’. For instance, women who have higher education or/and additional higher education are twice as likely to do additional jobs than those with lower levels of education (Belyaeva et al. 2000). Thus, because a psychology degree is quite broad and because psychology is manifold in its applications it allowed my interviewees to engage in various types of employment and therefore gave them certain advantages. For instance, even though they worked at different jobs they still worked in the same profession compared to those women who were forced to engage in unqualified supplementary work for survival (see Yaroshenko et al. 2006). Working in several jobs allowed psychologists to get the most out of their work; for instance working in a private setting meant earning money, working in a firm allowed having rewarding relationships with colleagues, working in the state sector gave a sense of stability. However, working in several jobs seemed to cause a lot of distress to many of my interviewees:

I think that I earn good money for a psychologist but I’m working in four jobs and I’m like a squirrel on a wheel! I have to work a hell of a lot to achieve a certain level!...[M]y income depends on how fast I run from one place to the other [laughs]... (MF4)

Now that I’m already in my early 40s, I would like to stop running from one place to the other. I would prefer something stable... I mean I’m ready to be engaged in various forms of professional activity, but I would like it to be within one institution, the same organization... You know, we always have to be in a hurry. (VF4)

Inevitably, working in several jobs meant that the counsellors also worked a vast number of hours. For instance, several interviewees in Vladivostok reported working with clients two or three days a week, but from 9 am until 10 pm! (VF1) Many people said they worked at weekends and without vacations for a long time. This busy schedule was augmented by the specificities of the services and the clientele market. For instance, the counsellors had to accommodate their clients who work:

I mean, for example, many of my clients visit me in the late hours, after they finish work... That's why my working day is often longer than that of a full-time worker. It may finish even after 11 pm. (MF9)

The qualification upgrade seminars that many of my interviewees conducted usually took place at weekends, not least because people could not afford to come during the week or during working hours. Considering that the counselling profession is very demanding, working such an immense number of hours can cause stress and professional burnout (see Leiter and Harvie 1996; Rupert and Kent 2007; Sherman 1996). Thus, multiple jobs may benefit pecuniary goals but in the long run they can lead to professional impairment.

Combining work in various sectors of employment did '[provide] a way in which people [could] optimise the balance of security and income earning opportunities' (Clarke 2002: 74). However, as I suggest, in a way this was a rather 'forced' choice. The inability of one sector and/or one job to provide for all (basic) employment needs (work record, decent salary, job security and positive work environment) meant that the counsellors had no choice but to have several jobs. They tried to adjust to the situation, and the fact that they did also signifies that they continued to reproduce it.

Selling Therapy: The Problem of Earning

In the three sections above, I indicated that most of the counsellors worked in several forms of employment, each of which seemed to fulfil its own function. As Clarke (2002: 79) writes, one of the main reasons for supplementary employment is maintaining a higher living standard by securing additional income. Considering the low level of wages in state sector employment in Russia, most of the 'additional income' for my interviewees seemed to come from jobs done in the private sector, and from their private practice. However, even in private practice it was not always easy to earn. More than half of my interviewees said that this profession did not allow high earnings. Among others, one of the main issues here seemed to be the problem with charging fees. The problem was articulated in two ways: the attitudes of clients to paying and the attitudes of therapists to charging.

Is It Even a Service? The Clients' Perspective

The level of fees one can charge depend on the overall financial solvency of the population which also differs by region. For instance, in Vladivostok all the counsellors reported charging lower fees than in Moscow due to the overall lower level of income in the area.

However, the problem here did not seem to be only economic but one of attitudes as well. Some of my interviewees pointed out that compared to the cost of other services the average session price was quite reasonable:

Sometimes they [clients] are surprised at the price of 1000 roubles... I ask them then: 'How much do you usually pay in a beauty shop for a hair cut?' because in fact they pay for it much more... And it's manual work... And the price for this service is the same as for our work which is much more difficult and demanding. (VF3)

I think in Moscow salaries are high enough to pay for sessions. Let's say that a manicure costs 1500 roubles [£30], and an average counselling session is also 1500 roubles! That's why I think that people *can* afford it. (MF13)

The question is, then, why are people not prepared to pay for *this* specific kind of service? There were at least two factors that could partially explain such attitudes: how the services were provided and their nature.

As I have discussed above, most counsellors provided services informally or on an unregistered basis. As Clarke (2002: 36) writes, in Soviet times there were many informal services that people provided privately for each other. However, because it was illegal to charge money, there was a tradition to pay in kind. Similarly, counsellors reported that some of their clients paid their fees in 'gifts':

I saw my first clients for free - these clients were recommended by my acquaintances or were my acquaintances. They brought me biscuits and boxes of sweets and felt very embarrassed [laughs]. (VF8)

Sometimes people ask for help and they bring me some gifts... For example, once one guy got me a painting... but this person was not a stranger. He was a friend of one of my acquaintances... (MF15)

As these accounts suggest giving gifts rather than paying for services can partly result from the fact that the clients and therapists know each other. Furthermore, seeing a counsellor who works informally could further 'support' clients' reluctant attitudes to paying fees. There is also no legal or organisational framework for setting fees and usually the counsellors reported charging an 'average' fee. However, it may not always be clear to the

clients (and the therapists) what the rationale behind calculating this average fee is.¹³³ Thus, keeping counselling in the informal niche seemed to uphold the perception that one could pay less, pay in kind, or not pay at all.

The situation with paying fees was exacerbated by the history of free provision of many kinds of services in Soviet times. For instance, it may be argued that one of the reasons for the problems with charging fees is the fact that medicine used to be free in the Soviet Union so people are not prepared to pay for services allied to medicine. However, as researchers point out, Russian people *are used to* paying informally for medical services for a variety of reasons related to the flaws of the healthcare system in the Soviet Union (Balabanova and McKee 2002; Thompson and Witter 2000). Thus, the issue here seems to be with the attitude to counselling services *per se*. As one of the interviewees said, because technically counselling is not a medical service (no apparent invasive treatment is involved), it may seem to be less useful or/and less expert, therefore people may be less prepared to pay for it:

Here in Russia it is believed that such help [therapy] should come free. There is a myth that talking to a person is not a job and one should not charge for it. (MF4)

This issue is complicated by the fact that these kinds of services are relatively new for Russia. ‘Psychotherapy’ in the Soviet period was done with a friend in the kitchen. Thus, it seems that in the eyes of the general public, counselling services do not yet have full credibility as a profession. The low level of knowledge about the content of psychological services seemed to sustain the attitude that ‘everyone is a little bit of a psychologist himself’ (VF8). As one of my interviewees said:

It seems to them [to clients] that these services [counselling] have nothing professionally specific in them... They think they can easily do what a psychologist does, that it’s very straightforward... I mean, it’s like - I know I understand nothing in law or medicine and here I understand something. So it seems that I can do exactly the same thing as a specialist can do. (MF3)

Thus, the doubt in the expertise of psychology could further stimulate reluctant attitudes to paying fees. The fact that the majority of counsellors are women and popular doubt about

¹³³ In Australia, for example, the recommended fee for a session is set by the Australian Psychological Society and is consistent with the minimum wage legislation requirements. See <http://www.psychology.org.au/prac_resources/earnings/#state>. Accessed 17 March 2009.

female expertise also seemed to devalue the services (I come back to this point in the next chapter).

Is It Even a Business? The Therapists' Perspective

Besides the problem of clients' (un)willingness or inability to pay fees, counsellors' own attitudes towards charging for their services seemed to contribute to the problem of earning a living in this profession. Charging money was an uneasy topic for many of my interviewees. One source of problems with charging fees was the informal mode of provision of counselling. For instance, this interviewee reported having an ethical problem with charging money:

But I can't take money from people just like that [without doing it officially], I feel sort of uncomfortable about it. I mean if I don't pay taxes, how can I charge any fees? (MF15)

This, however, was not a very typical concern. What did seem to influence the counsellors' attitudes to charging fees was the Janus-faced nature of services. The nature of counselling services is quite problematic as it does not seem to fit the models of 'care' or 'cure' professions. For instance, Baumann et al. (1998) provide descriptions of the dimensions of care and cure, comparing their goals, treatment options and other aspects of work and highlight that (in the western context) 'the cure model has been associated with physicians, and the care model with nursing and *other allied health professions*' (ibid.: 1040-1041, my emphasis). While psychotherapy/counselling has some similar features with the 'cure' model (e.g. diagnosing, reducing the symptoms, treatment of the problem), it also incorporates many 'care' traits (such as the overlap of treatment options, not directly measurable outcomes).¹³⁴ In addition, depending on which type of therapy a counsellor/psychotherapist uses in working with a client, the combination of the care/cure traits can vary. The nature of the services was not a problem in the process of treatment; however, this borderline position seemed to place the counsellors in a doubled difficulty when trying to charge money. There are many debates in relation to charging money in 'cure' professions (see Pellegrino 1999; Stone 1997) and in relation to charging money for 'care' (see Cancian and Olicker 2000; Qureshi 1990). Thus, as I show below, incorporating both care and cure traits in this profession meant that the counsellors' attitudes to charging fees were affected by the 'money debates' from *both* spheres.

¹³⁴ For more details on the care/cure comparison, see the table provided in Baumann et al. (1998: 1041).

First, the counsellors were clearly caught up in the problematic relationship of *money and 'cure'*. The 'place of money in healing' has been a topic of heated debates (Gunderman and Hubbard 2005; Stone 1997: 534). Generally, money matters were supposed to be divorced from actual practice. Doctors in the western context are not supposed to have money as their primary interest and professional organizations protect 'the doctor-patient relationship from the influence of money', for example through a health insurance system (Stone 1997: 536-537). The idea that 'money should never come before responsibility in this [counselling] profession' (MF10) and that 'one must not work only for money' (VF1) persisted in many of my interviewees' accounts. There seemed to be a clear separation between the notion of 'business/making money' versus having a 'calling' as a counsellor:

Well, then how to compare the notions of psychology and business... I can't say it's the same, I can't say psychology is business and I don't think this definition fits... Business is something different, something of another scale... As for psychology in general – it's more of a calling than business... (VF2)

If I wanted to be a really wealthy person I would have done some other business I think. Psychoanalysis is my calling... (MF2)

As I showed in the previous chapter, the concept of 'calling' can function as an exclusionary mechanism in the process of professionalisation. It also seems to fulfil the function of setting a boundary between 'right' and 'wrong' professional conduct. In the case of medicine, 'creat[ing] an image that their [doctor's] decisions were motivated by something other than profit' was meant to elevate the status of the profession (Stone 1997: 534). However, in the case of the counsellors in Russia, adhering to this pattern did not seem to produce the same (desired) result. The persistence of the idea that counselling is not just an ordinary money-making business seemed to require practitioners to be devoid of financial yearnings. This was quite disempowering considering the fact that private sector jobs were meant to earn counsellors their income. Moreover, a failure to charge seemed to (re)produce the devaluation of the profession as I discussed in the previous section.

Besides being affected by the 'money and cure' debates, the counsellors were also influenced by the discourses of whether it is right to charge *money for 'care'*. The difficulty of reconciling the 'care' dimensions of counselling and charging money was visible when my interviewees talked about the 'emotional' side of their profession. For

instance, it was difficult to deal with financial matters when working with loss or grief or sensitive issues:

Well, I see a person who comes to me in deep sorrow... He's lost someone dear or something like this... So we are working on overcoming this grief – well, I thought, how could I possibly charge money? Well, I did charge something of course... I had to pay the rent for the office... But I didn't take a penny for myself... (VF7)

A study of dentists in the UK (Calnan et al. 2000) showed contradictory attitudes to the entrepreneurial part of their medical practice. Because they perceived their work as a 'care' profession, many reported difficulties charging fees in private practice. Clearly, for some counsellors it was difficult to charge money for the same reason.

Despite certain difficulties, the counsellors working in private practice commonly charged the clients, justifying it by the therapeutic effect that fees have for a client (the argument being that a client will devalue therapy if s/he is not paying enough money (Tulipan 1983)). However, because 'enough' is different for everyone and because many counsellors tried to take into consideration the economic situation of people there was still a problem of sliding fees. Many of my interviewees also had so-called 'charity' clients – those whom they charged significantly less than others: 'Well, of course sometimes I don't charge that much – I always have a couple of clients whom I see for a very low price...' (MF14). Sliding fees are also common among psychiatrists and psychotherapists in the western context:

In contrast with others who charge a set fee for services (barbers, fortune tellers, piano teachers, literary agents), the psychotherapist very often varies his fee. The others, who place a specific value on their services, maintain their businesses with the implicit dictum, 'If you can't afford my price, go elsewhere.' Some psychiatrists do this. Others don't, either denying, thereby, the commodity value of their services, or affirming it, but basking in the sunshine of their philanthropy. (Tulipan 1983: 457)

Tulipan concludes that this attitude 'belie[s] the other stated opinion that psychotherapeutic services are worth a specific amount of money in the therapy market' (ibid.: 485).

Although some counsellors seemed to have sliding fees out of compassion, altruism or care for clients, there was, however, one economic reason for sliding fees among my interviewees. Sometimes in a situation of a lack of clients, a counsellor had a choice between charging less and losing a client. Many times in this situation they would choose

to lower the fee. Many counsellors at the start of their career simply could not afford a fixed fee. This in turn makes one's income more unstable and dependent on the kinds of clients one has (for instance in terms of class).

A low fee or no fee reduces a psychotherapist's self-respect (Tulipan 1983) and can cause burn-out. This was clear from the accounts of my interviewee:

I'm thinking now that my professional burnout that I've just had [she had to stop working for 9 months] was also due to that fact that I didn't have any monetary reward for my work. Of course I was losing motivation – you know why am I doing this and so on... If I'm not getting any money, this meant that I'm not really a professional... (VF7)

This suggests that negotiating money and reasonable fees was a difficult but necessary part of private practice. However, in the absence of any official and organisational guidelines or support from the professional community on this matter the counsellors were left to battle out these matters on their own.

The Gender Dimension

The problem of charging fees also seemed to be fuelled by the gender factor. In their study of American counsellors Parvin and Anderson (1999: 21) found that female therapists in their sample were much more likely to adjust/lower their fees and to take into consideration the financial capability of their clients, believing that 'economic issues should not overshadow the importance of work'. These findings seem to be consistent with my sample. For instance, my male interviewees had far less trouble seeing their profession as a means of earning money. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, all my male interviewees envisaged themselves earning money in this profession right from the start. They had little trouble seeing psychotherapy as a form of business because all three mentioned the necessity of being the breadwinner in the family. In contrast, there was a large number of women who worked in several jobs but still did not see earning money as an objective of their work:

I think that psychotherapists can have different inclinations so to speak... One is more of a philosopher; another is more of a businessperson... I think that inside I'm not a material person and it has always been like this in all my work and professions... The material dimension is not my highest priority. I'm not a material girl. (MF2)

What do you mean to cover the expenses? In what sense? No, I don't intend to and I can't cover everything I have invested in my education... I think it would be impossible as they were too high! I'm working in counselling because I like it, not because I want it to pay off. (MF13)

Parvin and Anderson (1999) argue that one of the reasons for gender differences in fee setting may be rooted in the socioeconomic origins of therapists. Indeed, as I have previously suggested, one of the reasons why some women in my sample had looser attitudes towards money matters was the fact that those women were not really living on the bread line. The ability to pay for their education usually meant that the women had their family or partners to rely on financially; they were not expected and did not see themselves as the main providers for the family. This was the experience of about 60% of my interviewees.¹³⁵ Such a state of affairs could be seen as liberating in a way, since these women did not *have to* work so hard (even if they chose to). However, the flip side of the coin was that such attitudes affected women's ability to charge fees and led to the devaluation of their work. Since women had husbands, partners or parents who were responsible for breadwinning, the women felt that charging high fees for their work was unnecessary. Being in the position of a secondary earner in the family also rendered their income insignificant:

I've just remembered one major difficulty that I had – it was very difficult for me to charge money for my work...Because you know for a long time I was treating my work somehow...well I somehow devalued it...I didn't treat it as a real profession and I think people also treated it like my hobby... Why? Well, I had this idea that my husband earns money for the family... (VF7)

Thus, the dominant ideal of a male breadwinner seemed to lead to the fact that the women themselves devalued their work and its income-generating potential, as well as their input into the family budget. The male breadwinner ideal was deeply internalised, which is exemplified by the fact that although about 40% of women in my sample were the primary (and only) breadwinners in their families, and moreover, they worked hard and earned well, even then they seemed to reiterate that 'a man should be the earner in the family'.

Of course, one can argue that money is not the primary goal or satisfaction factor for psychotherapists. In their study of practising psychologists, Stevanovich and Rupert

¹³⁵ About 14 out of 23 of my female interviewees mentioned that they were not struggling financially and earning money was not their primary goal (even though they worked hard and long hours). The other nine women however had to support themselves (and sometimes their children) with their wages.

(2004: 304) found that extrinsic rewards such as money or status were not among the main work satisfaction factors for psychological work. The leading factors were intrinsic rewards such as helping others, professional autonomy, intellectual stimulation and general enjoyment of work. However, the same cohort of psychologists named 'economic uncertainty' as a primary stress factor in their work. This was also echoed in the accounts of my interviewees: working in several jobs and not being able to maintain a good level of income caused distress. The ability to reconcile the ideals of psychological services and money seemed to resolve the issue of charging fees:

Money is an equivalent of what I cost as a specialist... only when I realised that money is an equivalent of my professional abilities then I was able to overcome this problem with setting fees... (VF7)

Women who had experience or training in business had fewer problems seeing psychology as a way of making money. Those women who ran centres also had fewer problems defining psychology as a business and called it so in the interview. In contrast, only a few of those who had an informal private practice as the only form of interaction with clients called it a business.

As Tulipan (1983: 456) writes, a psychotherapist sells certain skills. Thus, part of the problem seemed to be that until people (and that, as I have shown, includes both clients and therapists) start to see psychotherapy as a valuable skill it seems hard to sell. The attitudes of both clients and therapists to money in this profession seemed to be shaped by the process of negotiation of the nature and the worth of these services, which was complicated by the absence of formal norms and the gender factor.

A Story of Success

As I have outlined, there are numerous challenges that psychotherapists meet in their day-to-day life. But not only was it difficult to adjust to the lack of any normative framework. The 'survival strategies' of the counsellors were complicated by the fact that these matters are not widely discussed, especially in Russia. There are several studies for instance of American psychologists and psychotherapists (Guy 1987; Horton and Varma 1997; Wilkins 1997) which focus on professional issues such as stress, professional and emotional burnout, issues with supervision, the impact of being a psychotherapist on one's personal and family relationships and so on. Some of these findings indeed resonated with my interviewees' accounts. However, most of these studies look at the psychological

aspects and difficulties of this profession. None of them mention mundane, day-to-day challenges. Little attention is paid to the discussion of the practical aspects of ‘getting on’ in the profession. How does one get one’s first client? How does one pay the rent if one has only seen three clients in a month? How does one make a living? All of these things seem to be an invisible part of the counsellors’ professionalism. Does this mean that the issues connected with the therapeutic practice *per se* outweigh the difficulties of surviving day-to-day practicalities?

Cynthia Rogers (2004) writes that there is an unspoken rule that there is a boundary between the personal and the professional lives of psychotherapists: a specialist is not supposed to bring any ‘personal’ issues into the ‘professional’ session. There also seems to be the same illusory line between therapeutic practice and the practicalities related to it. The idea that a patient-therapist relationship has to be separate from any of the ‘external’ nuisances is largely responsible for the silence about the mundane matters among therapists and in the literature. Cynthia Roger’s book (2004) is probably one of the few that discusses topics such as creating a business plan, doing financial planning for one’s private practice and so on. It is, however, a book of advice – there is virtually no other research on how therapists actually get by in their practice, except a few brief chapters (e.g. Feltham 1993). This absence of practical guidelines may imply that the path of a counsellor in the western context is clearly structured and people just gradually move from one stage of their professional career to the next.¹³⁶ However, most of my interviewees struggled with practical matters at the start of their career and beyond, but had never systematically thought about the origins of these inconveniences in their practice. Many had problems coming up with an answer when I asked about practical difficulties in their work or about the things that they would like to change in order to make their working practice easier:

MK: Did you experience any difficulties when you just started counselling?

VF7: When I just started working... Hmmm... I can’t quite remember what difficulties I had then... I believe there was something... Some fears maybe...

¹³⁶ It is beyond the scope of my thesis to discuss this matter; however, I would speculate that most likely the professional route of the counsellor in the western context is also no bed of roses. However, the only way researchers tried to shed a little light on these question seems to be through survey-based research on work satisfaction among psychologists (e.g. Coster and Schwebel 1997; Kramen-Kahn and Hansen 1998; Stevanovic and Rupert 2004). In such surveys, psychologists identify whether they are satisfied with their workload, client load, income, profession etc. However, the kinds of questions asked and the way in which the results are usually presented (e.g. 94% were ‘somewhat satisfied’ with the profession overall (Stevanovic and Rupert 2004: 303)) usually does not say anything about individual problems. It may also be considered ‘unprofessional’ to talk about the mundane.

The interesting thing was that my interviewees could easily talk about the overall problems in the field and had more to say about the question of ‘why other people quit’ than about what difficulties *they* experienced – even if they were exactly the same.¹³⁷ This suggests that the silence about such problems does not necessarily signify their absence. I would suggest that this silencing has its roots in the culture of professionalism (see Davies, C. 1996; Fournier 1999; Murray 2006) and the existing perception of workplace and worker as disembodied (Acker 1992; Benschop and Doorewaard 1998). In such a ‘culture’, dwelling on mundane matters or voicing gender related ‘excuses’ or concerns is not part of the concept of ‘real’ professionalism. Being a professional in this framework is a story of individual success. Thus, stressing one’s achievements rather than admitting difficulties and/or mistakes is what makes one look professional.

Silencing difficulties can also be interpreted through the framework of cultural specificities. First, there was little help from the professional psychological community, as I explain in Chapter 6, the community *per se* did not really exist. Therefore, there was little space to discuss professional difficulties of any kind. Second, Busse (2001: 8) has characterised life in Russia as ‘a series of problems that must be solved’: ‘Life is less a process of a goal attainment than a perpetual process of solving unexpected problems that inevitably arise’ (ibid). In this sense, talking about the problems that everyone else has may just be seen as a waste of time or as useless ‘whinging’. The idea that ‘everyone lives like this’ promotes the notion that such a life is the norm and it is one’s own problem to deal with. This, in turn, reproduces the existing situation.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have analysed the multiple challenges that counsellors in Russia face when entering the profession and in their day-to-day working lives. I have argued that the work experiences of counsellors are embedded in their specific cultural and economic context, and are shaped by gender, age and class. The counsellors’ experiences are also often different from those of their western counterparts. For instance, the under-development of legal regulations and the lack of a professional and organisational infrastructure produce specific patterns of entry into the profession such as starting to practise while studying or finding jobs through networks. The flaws in each sector of

¹³⁷ This silence about individuals’ professional problems could also signify the (understandable) desire to look like a competent specialist in the eyes of a *researcher* (me).

employment (public, private and informal) create a situation where counsellors are forced into having several jobs in different sectors because each one fulfils a certain function that the other cannot provide. For instance, jobs in the public sector are kept to provide security, for the purposes of a formal job record, or as a source for networks and clients. Jobs in the private sector are usually meant to be the main source of income; however, there are many complications in this sphere in Russia. High taxes, complicated legislation and the instability of the client flow (for economic reasons and due to the specificities of advertising) make it difficult for counsellors to earn a living in a registered private practice which means that many are pushed into the informal economy. Although there are advantages in not being registered, practising informally seems to create a situation where psychological services are devalued in terms of both pay and status by clients and the therapists themselves. This issue is exacerbated by the presence of both 'care' and 'cure' characteristics in counselling and their problematic position in relation to moneymaking.

The working experiences of the counsellors interviewed differed according to their age, class and gender. For instance, it was not necessarily easier for women to enter a female-dominated profession. Szalai (2000: 206) argues that the expansion of feminised sectors allowed *en masse* female advancement. However, as my research suggests, it is not necessarily easy for *all* women to get into a feminised occupation. Securing a job at the start of one's career depended on factors such as the counsellor's age, gender and partly on the quality of his/her networks. Gender differences were also visible in how women and men viewed the profession. Men had little trouble seeing its income-generating potential because it was their means of providing for the family. For women it seemed to be more difficult and they saw this work as vocation, not least because they were not usually (considered) the primary breadwinners in the family. Such attitudes led them to undervalue their work and the importance of their earnings.

The accounts of my interviewees create a picture of a chaos engrained in the system. There is vicious circle whereby it is easier to survive when not following the legal rules, but the lack of appropriate legislative support and keeping the activity in the informal sector seemed to worsen the situation in the long run; it perpetuated the issues with earning money and reproduced the attitudes of devaluation of the profession. This seemed to be exacerbated by the adherence to individualist ideals of professionalism and 'achievements' which contributed to the silencing of the problematic as well as often mundane aspects of the profession.

Chapter 5: 'A Male Psychologist Is Not a Man; a Female Psychologist Is Not a Psychologist': The Gendered Views of/in the Profession and Beyond

Introduction

In the two previous chapters I analysed the ways in which counsellors get into and get on with their profession and showed that gender significantly shaped this process. In this chapter I shall examine how counsellors saw and interpreted the significance of gender in their profession. I shall focus on how these (often contradictory) views are intertwined with the dominant gender ideology, professional ideology and personal experiences.

As I identified in the Introduction there is a vast literature on the feminisation of the professions within the western context (e.g. Britton 2000; England 2005; Menkel-Meadow 1989; Reskin and Roos 1990; Wright and Jacobs 1994) which considers the reasons for and the mechanisms through which occupations become female dominated and the consequences of these processes. The feminisation of professions may be understood in a range of ways and there are different views on whether this process has the potential to alter existing gender relations (Le Feuvre 1999). Britton (2000: 431) also points out the importance of looking at 'how gendered organisational [and occupational] structures determine the experiences of workers in masculinised and feminised occupations'. In the following I shall concentrate on how the professionals I interviewed saw and negotiated the role of gender in counselling. I analyse their perceptions and experiences of this feminised profession and consider how these perceptions are influenced by the existing gender regimes in the profession and in Russian society in general.

I start by outlining the specialists' general views of the genderedness of their profession. Then I proceed to discuss counsellors' more specific gender views of their male and female colleagues, analysing some of the inconsistencies and contradictions in their accounts. This is followed by consideration of their views on the importance of gender in relation to their clientele. Finally, I discuss counsellors' views of gender norms and roles in society and analyse how and why they are inevitably intertwined with professional practices.

Gendered Views of the Profession

One of the ways in which scholars understand feminisation is in terms of a profession being (re)defined as ‘women’s work’, i.e. ‘more suitable’ for women as it demands supposedly female characteristics (Adams 2005; Holbrook 1991). These gendered definitions can be a product of cultural stereotypes and/or reflect the views of the workers themselves, with the latter being more flexible (Britton 2000). Psychology was not categorically labelled a ‘female profession’ by all my interviewees. At least a quarter of my respondents said that it was gender neutral:

It is neither a female nor a male profession. It is a human profession...
Only those who can fulfil all the requirements and bear everything
actually stay in psychology and psychotherapy. (VF5)

This neutrality may in part be a product of the gender subtext, i.e. the objectified and abstract concepts and procedures that ‘mask’ gender under the umbrella of neutrality and professionalism (Acker 1992; Benschop and Doorewaard 1998; Smith, D. 1990). Such views may also result from the fact that for a long time the idea of a ‘gender-neutral’ Soviet citizen and worker was propagated in the Soviet Union (see Bauer 1975; Gorsuch 1996; Metcalfe and Affansieva 2005). However, deeper into the conversation the views of the professionals turned out to be more gendered. For instance many female psychologists indicated that the profession was potentially more suitable for women:

In our, I mean in the Russian mentality the viewpoint about a female character of the profession of a psychologist predominates... Or that you can go to a woman and cry on her shoulder... I think that the stereotype is that this is a specifically female domain... I mean for a woman it is easier to give – well, the profession of a psychologist is associated with giving, giving oneself. (MF9)

This interviewee suggested that the profession was rendered ‘feminine’ by popular general stereotypes which served as a reinforcement of her opinion. This was a common way of talking about gender ‘suitability’ in the profession. None of the female interviewees, however, seemed to explicitly disagree with or criticize these ideas, although some said that if one is a professional, then gender does not matter. My male interviewees on the contrary tended to label the profession as male-gendered (or neutral):

Well, I'm not sure it is a feminine profession... yes, in terms of numbers... Yes... Although there are men... I wouldn't say there are no men at all. (MM2)

There is a need for male qualities, strong will, abilities to be stoic, even male physical strength is sometimes required to work with some clients. In this sense this profession often isn't meant for a woman, I mean sometimes women can't handle it. A lot of experience is required... Some women for example are scared when a male client comes in and especially when he comes in some borderline or inadequate condition and some women don't know what to do with them... So I think it is a male profession to be honest. (MM1)

Such flexible redefinitions of gender-appropriateness and of 'doing gender' have been identified in the studies of other professions such as law, sales, teaching and insurance business (Leidner 1991; Lupton 2000; Pierce 1995; Pullen and Simpson 2009). It is a strategy for adjusting to being in a non-traditional occupation (both for men and women). There was, then, no consensus among my interviewees and the gender 'appropriateness' of the profession was diversely constructed: women saw it as 'feminine' (or 'neutral') while men did not. Each validated their presence in the profession by aligning it with gender stereotypes associated with their own gender.

The narratives about concrete men and women in this profession turned out to be even more visibly gendered. There is a well-known saying that was equally often quoted both by male and female interviewees: *a male psychologist is not a man, a female psychologist is not a psychologist*. The attitudes to and the explanations of this enigmatic statement varied and in fact the opinions about gender roles, were full of contradictions. In the next three sections I analyse the various inconsistencies in the counsellors' views of the role and significance of gender and show how these opinions linked to their professional and social practices.

Gendered Views of Colleagues: A Female Psychologist Is Not a Psychologist?

Just as there was no one viewpoint about the 'gender' of the profession in general, there were also inconsistencies when my interviewees talked about the importance of the gender of their colleagues.

Who Makes a Better Counsellor?

Sex-typing of a profession is closely related to the construction of the important professional characteristics in a given occupation, and to the ways in which male and female specialists are perceived, both within the profession and by the public (Cejka and Eagly 1999; Glick et al. 1995). Indeed, the majority of my interviewees said that ‘feminine’ qualities such as caring, understanding, being able to listen, empathy and compassion were very important for a counsellor. However, when asked whether male or female counsellors had any advantages as *specialists* at first the majority of my interviewees gave a negative answer:

But actually for me I don’t think sex matters that much – for me it is more important that the candidate is professional. (VF7)

I don’t think that gender matters more here than some individual, personal characteristics... Both men and women are welcome to develop their skills... It’s exactly individual characteristics rather than gender differences that determine whether you are going to be a good specialist... (VF4)

The one instance of a possible advantage that was often mentioned was cases which were said to require specific sex-role transference/identification as part of the therapeutic process¹³⁸ (for instance, therapy regarding a father-son relationship was said to be more productive when working with a male counsellor). However, many acknowledged that because clients’ problems vary there were issues that could be better dealt with by a woman and similarly there were instances where working with a male specialist was seen as more advantageous¹³⁹:

What I mean to say is that of course there are transferences. And of course if they are positive, they let you work on many things with the client. But of course men have their transferences too... (VF7)

¹³⁸ The concept of a transference was developed by Freud and can be summed up as the unconscious projection (transference) of a patient’s feelings (often sexual) originally directed towards someone (e.g. mother, father) onto the therapist (Racker 1982: 12-13).

¹³⁹ In fact, as Maguire (1995: 144) notes, ‘in classical psychoanalytic theory maternal and paternal transferences are equally likely to arise whatever the sex of the therapist’. It is out of the scope of this thesis to engage in the assessment of the role of transference and gender for the therapy process. I have to note that from my modest experience in counselling psychology I personally find gender to be an important factor in the therapy process and outcome. However, for the purposes of this thesis I do not look at gender from the psychological point of view but rather try to pinpoint its sociological significance.

The majority of my interviewees, then, regardless of their gender, tended to believe that one's success as a specialist depended mainly on the quality of one's work. Men and women who already worked in the profession were thought to be equally able to develop/possess all the necessary professional characteristics. This means that although initial sex-typing of the profession may impact on the way in which men or women are seen to be more *suitable* for it (Meadus 2000; Williams, C. 1992), once a person undertakes a professional position it is not certain that, for example, a woman will continue to be seen to have advantages in a female-dominated profession by virtue of possessing 'feminine' qualities.

In fact, in terms of professional image, some of my female interviewees insisted that a female therapist should present herself in a gender-neutral manner and condemned the expression of 'excessive femininity':

When I was developing my website I researched a lot of other websites. And these websites reminded me of some 'women's interest clubs' because those web pages had a big photo of a psychologist in some pink sweater with butterflies and bows in her hair... They had sections which only focus on such topics as child rearing or on how to keep your man... Some kind of psychological version of *Cosmopolitan* – not professional work... It was an example of how you should not do it. (MF2)

Thus, butterflies and pink sweaters were considered unprofessional. As Benschop and Doorewaard (1998: 801) point out, in male-dominated professional environments women 'do not identify themselves with femininity' because of the hegemonic masculine nature of organizations. Similarly, trumpeting female characteristics unrelated to the work needs (e.g. 'excessive' femininity, sexuality or/and appearance) was not seen as professional in the female-dominated professional environment of psychology. In fact, the interesting thing in my sample was that women seemed to consider men to be generally more professional than their female colleagues:

But I actually noticed that when a man works as a psychologist he sort of treats everything quite more seriously... I mean it seems like men are more professional somehow... Well, it's hard to explain, it's like they are deeper in studying things for example... They go deeper and, ladies, they sort of drift on the surface. (MF8)

There was no evidence in my sample that men were more qualified than women: the representatives of both sexes seemed to have equally impressive CVs. However,

because of men's minority status and because they (allegedly) had to overcome the difficulty of working in a female-dominated profession men were constructed to be more motivated and therefore better professionals:

Well, because psychology is a female profession, men who do it are really motivated, and they usually have a strong desire to do that and have a passion for it. So they are not like those nouveau riche dollar-minded girls – who do a degree, just so that they can call themselves psychologists... (MF5)

The 'boost' in the construction of male professionalism can partly be explained through the idea of the devaluation of care work and women's work in care (see England 2005). It can be argued that feminine characteristics related to work (caring, empathy etc.) can be less valued in women since they allegedly come 'naturally' to them and are not perceived to be labour (Adkins 2001; 2002; Wolkowitz 2006). On the other hand, because possessing these 'female qualities' is not 'natural' for men, they presumably have to work at developing them. Therefore, although at times stigmatised as I show later, the same qualities can be valued more in men than in women. Furthermore, I suggest that the image of men's higher professionalism in Russian psychology was bolstered by the visibility of the allegedly 'incompetent' female majority. In other words, proportionally there are many women in psychology and as I pointed out in Chapter 3 many women seemed to enter this profession for what were perceived to be the 'wrong' (non-labour market related) reasons, while men mainly intended to build a career and earn money (see Chapters 3 and 4). This difference could add to the devaluation of female specialists as a category of workers. For instance, when my interviewees talked about women in this profession rather than focus on the fact that there are many female specialists of outstanding quality, the focus was always on the fact that there are many incompetent female counsellors who got into the profession for the wrong reason and do not really want to advance themselves professionally. So not only was there a 'bad psychologist' to blame who was usually young (see Chapter 4), but furthermore, she was usually a woman.

While excessive femininity did not seem to be in favour, male counsellors on the contrary were not 'criticised' for possessing and displaying specific 'masculine qualities'. In fact, because men were in the minority, those qualities were seen as an advantage. When asked about the sex ratio in the profession, about a third of my interviewees pointed out that 'men are desperately needed in this profession' (MF1). Men were seen to have a 'unique male perspective' that was regarded as crucial to the counselling practice, especially for those who practised family therapy:

This sphere [family psychology] requires both men and women psychologists, it's better when your co-therapist is a man... It shows some additional behavioural patterns. Men have other energetic potentialities, other knowledge, and other ways of thinking and so on. (VF4)

The idea of inevitable differences between men and women and therefore the exclusivity (i.e. the inaccessibility to women) of a male standpoint was prominent in many accounts. Thus, the 'masculine component' and the ability to serve as a 'true male role model' was what made men valuable:

Sometimes in a counselling process I understand that for a particular client it would be preferable to visit a male psychologist. I mean that if we deal with some really 'male' problems there is a need for a male specialist... Some masculine component is missing you know. (VF3)

The lack of some kind of virility in this sphere of psychology can be felt very acutely... (MF12)

Thus, in a way, the idea of professionalism made women resort to 'neutral' behaviour and at the same time the perceived lack of men let male specialists 'preserve' their qualities, which clearly signifies the underplaying of the worth of 'femininity'. This is consistent with other studies of female-dominated occupations. Cejka and Eagly (1999: 422) showed 'the overall perceived importance of masculine cognitive characteristics [e.g. rationality, reason] to occupational success, even in female-dominated occupations' (see also Powell et al. (2009) on rejection of femininity by women in male-dominated occupations). Kirchmeyer and Bullin (1997: 90) in their study of female nurses showed that 'even though the nurses endorsed masculinity and femininity equally and indicated rather androgynous gender roles, what predicted success in this traditionally female occupation was masculinity.' Femininity was often associated with possessing less experience and seemed to be less valued than masculinity.

Despite the rather predictable discourses of the importance of male and/or female characteristics for the professionals, an interesting contradiction emerged from the interviewees' accounts. While women talked about the 'lack of a masculine component', men in this profession were seen by the same women as 'effeminised', possessing mostly feminine characteristics:

But actually a lot of men who come into this profession are very
'feminised' so to speak, they have a lot of female characteristics... (VF3)

In other words, it was not exactly clear how these men would provide the model of virility to clients (I discuss this point in detail further in this chapter) that was declared desirable.

Although many counsellors admitted that ideas about whether men or women are more suitable for this profession were just relying on gender stereotypes, they did not seem to contest them. Moreover, as I show below, these ideas of gender did not just remain at the level of discourse; they also translated into professional practice as recounted by the counsellors.

Who Has the Better Career?

As I have mentioned the majority of my interviewees said that, as specialists, neither men nor women had any overriding advantages (although at a closer look, these views were more complex). However, when asked for whom it is easier to build a career in this female-dominated profession about 80% of my interviewees said it was easier for a man:

I think it's easier for a man. There is a great demand for them, as there are just a few of them. When a man appears in the study group a teacher always pays more attention to him... Because, I mean, he came! What more? [laughs] One should support him, not let him leave this profession! It is very disappointing when men leave.^[140] (MF1)

I think it is easier for a man because there are very few and they are worth their weight in gold... So I think that due to the fact that there are very few men in this profession they are valued more and it takes them less time to build a career. (MF7)

The main explanation, given by both male and female counsellors, for this rather unequal career advancement opportunity, was men's numerical scarcity. Their mere numerical

¹⁴⁰ This interviewee's desire to keep men in the profession may seem to contradict the statement by Lisova (on p.52) which indicates that men drop out or get expelled from their degree programme. However, these interviewees are referring to slightly different circumstances. While the quote on this page refers to those already in the profession (and attending a CPD workshop) Lisova (p.52) refers to the situation concerning undergraduate students, so effectively they are talking about different cohorts. And there is, of course, a difference between attending a professional study group or a workshop and attending a university degree program (where one can be expelled due to a variety of reasons outlined in the university regulations, e.g. unsatisfactory academic progress, breach of a university's code of practice, breach of accommodation regulations etc). Finally, the contradictions in the statements may arise because, understandably, individual interviewees may feel slightly differently and have different opinions about the same issues.

shortage allowed male therapists to have more clients, simply because there may be more demand for them. Moreover, as my female interviewees said, they would sometimes redirect clients to male counsellors if they saw such a need. Researchers (Evans, J. 1997; Meadus 2000; Piper and Collamer 2001; Williams, C. 1992; 1995a; 1995b) argue that generally male tokens in female-dominated professions do not experience discrimination similar to the one that female tokens experience in male-dominated professions, but rather have extra benefits. This was echoed in my sample. Furthermore, as I analyse below, women themselves seemed to facilitate such male advantage.

Research on how men are seen in female-dominated occupations shows that women are often supportive of their male colleagues (Meadus 2000; McMillan et al. 2006; Williams, C. 1992). In my sample, not only were they supportive, in fact women in power positions, for example directors of psychological centres, also tended to discriminate on sex bases. Research shows that recruitment decisions and practices can often be skewed by gendered assumptions about the characteristics of a workplace or worker (Guerrier et al. 2009; Reskin and Roos 1990; Skuratowicz and Hunter 2004). In my sample the preferences were more straightforward: *ceteris paribus*, women directors preferred to hire a man because of their numerical under-representation in the centres. Such preference was partly rooted in the desire to provide clients with the choice of consulting a male or a female therapist and in the hope of attracting more clients:

Well, at the moment I have more women than men so if I would employ someone I'd prefer a man... There is something in men counsellors that women lack I think... Then again they attract more men clients. (MF7)

Moreover, as I have mentioned before, the belief in the psychological importance of sex-role identification when working with particular cases exacerbated the perceived 'need' for male counsellors to the point where a male counsellor could be hired just for being a man:

Well, for example I now have eight women working with me and I really want to employ at least one man, well, a young man because for this wage I won't find an experienced specialist. So, say, I'm having an interview with a young man and, as far as I understand, if in his fourth year he can name only 4-5 modules that he remembers from the whole program... then he is a shitty specialist to put it mildly! But deep down in my soul I know that I really need a man here for various kinds of work, for working with incomplete families so there could be at least some male role model there... So in theory I understand that this man may not

be the best candidate ever... But I know that having 3-4 candidates for this one place I will be gender-biased in my choice... (MF11)

The phenomenon of the 'glass escalator', i.e. males' advantages in getting into and getting promotions in female-dominated jobs is well-documented (Hultin 2003; Maume 1999; Willimas, C. 1992; 1995a). One of the reasons is that men network with 'power groups', i.e. men in senior positions, and therefore get promoted (Evans, J. 2002; Floge and Merrill 1986; Gilloran 1995; Williams, C. 1995a). It was clear from the above quote that in this female-dominated occupation a man could also have an advantage in being hired or promoted even when women were in senior executive positions.¹⁴¹ Moreover, the above quote shows that not only was this gender biased choice 'justified' numerically (i.e. there are no men in the centre); it was also bolstered by 'psychological' arguments. In other words, the tenets of psychological theories (e.g. psycho-dynamic approaches) state that certain problems require sex-role identification as part of their treatment strategy. It is not my intent in this thesis to question the canon of psychological theories; indeed, the processes of transference and the gender of a therapist may play an important role in the process of counselling (see Gerhart and Lyle 2001). The point I want to emphasise is that the content of psychological theories can influence employment decisions in a discriminatory way. Moreover, the importance of the sex-role influence seemed to outweigh the fact that the specialist might be under-qualified for the job in question.¹⁴²

Male advantage was also facilitated (in a less direct way) by women's less positive attitudes towards female colleagues as analysed in the previous section. While women were ready to re-direct clients to male therapists, they were not necessarily willing to help other women in this profession especially in the smaller city (Vladivostok) because of the competition for resources such as clients and/or well-paid jobs. Moreover, women also condemned other women (often younger women) who did psychology for non-labour market related reasons (see Chapters 3 and 4). This findings echo the arguments in studies on female solidarity, which show that because women compete for scarce resources they are not willing to side with other women (Caplan and Bujra 1987) or they see little

¹⁴¹ Gorman (2005) in her study of hiring preferences in law firms showed that when there are few women in power positions they tend to hire more female employees (male partners tend to hire men). However, when the number of female partners increases this trend for hiring female employees diminishes and even becomes negative, i.e. women start giving preference to hiring men. Hiring preferences also positively correlate with the stereotypically feminine or masculine characteristics supposedly required for the job.

¹⁴² It should be acknowledged that as some interviewees mentioned, strategically it was sometimes more beneficial (in financial terms) for the agency to have a man on the staff regardless of his qualification because it meant having a wider range of opportunities to meet clients' requests which meant attracting more people and being better off financially. I also think that having a male role model is crucial in some cases. However, I do have doubts about whether a poorly qualified male specialist can resolve a problem just by virtue of being an 'appropriate' sex-role model.

prospect for professional advantages when working in female-dominated collectives compared to male-dominated ones (Drachman 1982).

Christine Williams (1995a) indicates that although women justified the promotion of male colleagues in female-dominated occupations in her study, they still experienced negative feelings about men being promoted into higher power positions. Similarly Allan (1993) points out that preferential hire of male elementary teachers caused conflicts with female staff. In my sample the majority of women admitted that men have a better chance of developing a career in psychology. However, none actually tried to contest that state of affairs or had strong negative feelings about this situation. Rather, they saw it as an inevitable fact. Partially, this was due to a sense of professional responsibility towards clients' needs and also because of the deeply internalised male breadwinner stereotypes (as I shall suggest later in this chapter). It can also be argued that another reason for such indifference about inequalities is the current perpetuation of individualism and merit-based discourses. As I discussed before, many counsellors were adamant that individual capabilities and personal effort are the drivers of one's success and the prerequisites of being a good specialist. Following the logic of individualism and merit one's career success should be proportionate to being a good specialist (since only a good specialist can advance in this ideal context). Therefore, men's better career achievements could come to be seen as well-deserved, since thinking otherwise contradicts the beliefs in meritocracy and gender equality that most of my interviewees held. Thus, being successful in one's career could come to be associated with being a good specialist and allowed some to harvest certain 'gender bonuses' without then being questioned.

The Counsellors' Perceptions of the Feminised Professional Setting

As I have just demonstrated, the construction of gender and its significance in this profession invariably influenced professional practices and attitudes. A further question is then, how did women conceptualise and regard the effect of the feminised nature of their profession? Research shows that women do not perceive men entering female-dominated occupations as a threat (Kauppinen-Tropainen and Lammi 1993; Williams, C. 1989). In my sample there seemed to be some concern about it. For instance, this interviewee said that if men started entering the profession, women would not find it easy to compete:

MK: Do you think that a woman is more likely to succeed in building career in this sphere?

VF1: You know, if men start to compete with us in this sphere... Then, I'm not sure [laughs]. If they would consider this profession to be attractive for them, then it may be that a lot of women would probably prefer a male counsellor...

However, in spite of this slight worry, this woman and quite a few female counsellors actually had negative feelings about the prevalence of women in the profession. One of the reasons for this, as I have mentioned, was professional concern for the well-being of clients who needed to see a male specialist in order to achieve a better result. There were two other reasons for the negative perception of feminisation in my sample: an idea that there was a need to maintain a 'gender balance' and a concern about the image of the profession. Some counsellors said that the dominance of women did not do the profession any good and spoke in favour of maintaining a 'gender balance' – both in numerical terms and in terms of gender roles:

I think that psychology really lacks and needs men. I think it's very effective to work in pairs, especially for family psychologists. In this case the professional approach is multi-sided, there's no opposition of genders, and at the same time this gender polarity is maintained... (MF9)

So in every profession ... if the ratio is not even, then the structure becomes skewed. Well, say the same thing is happening in schools... It's like a family without a father. It's not that the child will grow to be mentally deficient but he'll have problems - that's for sure. One needs to see both female and male forms of behaviour. (MF14)

Men were also apparently needed for 'socialising' purposes:

Because it doesn't matter how wonderful women are, something is going to be missing in a professional sense in a female community. We have two men – and we are fine. They have to be present. Because... well we interact not only professionally but we also go to BBQs or something. So we need men. (MF5, a director of a psychological centre)

Generally, it seemed that the urge for having both men and women in the profession seemed to have the goal of achieving a balance in representation. However, I suggest that it was also based on the idea of gender polarities. In other words, the underlying assumption was that men are ultimately different creatures from women and

only the representative of this given sex can provide 'authentic' gender views, roles and models. This signified that the essentialist gender role socialisation propagated in the Soviet Union still persists (Attwood 1990). These accounts also exemplified the contradiction of Soviet gender ideology: although 'it was proclaimed that male and female citizens of the Soviet Union were equal in all ways and should be treated as such' (Kay 2000: 23), traditional gender stereotypes, e.g. that 'a woman is not a man' (Gorsuch 1996: 636; Lyon 2008; White, A. 2005) still seemed to be engrained in people's consciousness.

Apart from the concern about the 'gender balance', a significant percentage of my interviewees both in Moscow and in Vladivostok felt that having more male specialists was crucial to the image of the profession. As one of my interviewees said:

Well, if there were more men in this profession, I guess that the image would be a little bit better. Our society is paternalistic. And when our people saw doctor Kurpatov^[143] on the screen... we witnessed a breakthrough of interest in counselling on that wave. Because... well, you see because [the attitude is] that if a man does certain work – a man is not expected to work for little money... he is not supposed to have any altruistic tendency as women do [laughs]... Or let's take women psychologists who have very rich husbands and treat psychological activity as a hobby... There is a difference... So... more men in this profession would contribute to the improvement of its image... (VF8)

This account shows that assessing a profession's image boils down to the assessment of the comparative value of male and female presence in the profession and women did not seem to pass with flying colours in this 'competition'. Glick et al. (1995: 565) argue that 'images of jobs are actually images of people who hold those jobs'. They found that the gender-related characteristics 'required' for an occupation did not have an immense influence on the gender-typing of the professions, but had a drastic effect on the professional prestige factor, i.e. the majority of jobs that were thought to require male characteristics were viewed as more prestigious. Moreover, these views were similar among men and women (ibid: 573; Budig 2002). Thus, it may be that the counsellors thought that associating psychology with a male image could raise its status; although research on nursing (Evans,

¹⁴³ A show launched in 2005 on Channel 1 Russian TV with Andrei Kurpatov as a host (See <http://www.1tv.ru/owa/win/ort5_peredach.peredach?p_shed_name_id=5710&p_alphabet_id=%C0>. Accessed 5 April 2009). Andrei Kurpatov has a degree in psychotherapy; he appeared in popular shows and according to his website wrote more than 70 (!) popular psychology books in 2008 which is quite 'impressive' if not slightly suspicious considering that his CV says he graduated from a medical university only in 1997 (See <<http://www.kurpatov.ru/page1.html>>. Accessed 5 April 2009).

J. 1996: 227; Gilloran 1995) shows that the entry of men into this female-dominated profession did not lead to the elevation of the status of all nurses but of men only.

There is no research or evidence on whether the appearance of a male host on the television program showcasing therapy sessions (the majority referred to the *Doctor Kurpatov* show) spurred an interest in psychology or whether the interest arose because it was just the first ever program that showed live counselling sessions. If the rise of the popularity of psychology was because of the male host, at the time this could benefit female counsellors as well as males. First of all a significant increase in the number of clients meant the increase in clients for all specialists in this profession; moreover, it is not clear whether the fact that one sees a male counsellor on television means that one would want to see a male-counsellor for one's self. However, the bigger issue was that while female counsellors criticised that particular male therapist (Kurpatov) they still continued to focus on and reproduce the idea of male specialists being more credible (as I have demonstrated in the previous section) and were not critical of these gender stereotypes, which further led to the devaluing of themselves as a category of workers.

Prestige was also associated with whether men are interested in therapy:

I mean, that the increase of male psychologists would influence the prestige of this profession... Then the number of men clients would increase... And men would treat psychology more seriously... For now they don't see it as any long-term or valuable project. (VF1)

In the description of a classical reason for the feminisation of professions Reskin and Roos (1990) argue that an increase of female clients invites more female workers which therefore results in feminisation and a fall in status. Drawing on this argument one might speculate that an increase in male clients might cause a higher demand for male psychologists and therefore the rise of the counsellors' professional status. As I show in the next section, male clients do not necessarily prefer a male counsellor. However, according to the above quote, the very fact that more men would consider going into therapy was perceived to mean an increase in the profession's status.

Riska (2008) writes that the 'fear' of feminisation is said to be common in western medicine and it is mostly related to a concern for the decline of its professional status if women continue to flood the profession. According to my interviewees' accounts although concerns about prestige were articulated, this was not the only issue that bothered the counsellors about the female dominance in the profession. As I have analysed, the desire to have more male counsellors also reflected a concern about providing the kind of services that clients need (e.g. seeing a male counsellor) and the recognition of the need to make the

profession more attractive to male clients. Research on nursing also shows that women approved of having men in the profession because they thought that their patients should have a choice of having a male or a female nurse (Gilloran 1995). This situation in itself may be the result of the influence of the female presence in this profession. For instance, it is argued that female doctors care more for the well-being of their patients (Spence 2004). Drawing on this argument, it can be speculated that in psychology women seemed to be more concerned about providing a better range of services rather than solely focusing on the prestige and status of the profession. Unfortunately, if that was the case that went unnoticed, since all but two women saw no positive aspects to the profession being feminised. Moreover, they did not see their feminised profession as an opportunity or as a starting point for creating a high status and highly paid women's field. Rather, they remained disapproving of the existing gender composition, pinpointing women's faults, emphasising men's achievements and neutralising/naturalising inequalities.

Gender and Clients: Women Working for Women?

The sex of a therapist was seen as an important part of the therapeutic process by the counsellors in my sample, and studies indicate that it can have an effect on the experience of therapy (Gehart and Lyle 2001). In this section I analyse counsellors' views on how gender impacts on therapeutic relationship and attitudes¹⁴⁴.

Practically all my interviewees reported a visible increase in the general number of clients and the growth of interest and psychological knowledge post 2000. Many attributed this rise to the gradual popularising of psychology in Russia. However, while the general number of clients seemed to be rising there were still major discrepancies in the sex composition of the clientele. All my interviewees (even the men) said that the majority of their clients were women. The ratio varied from '100% female clients' to 50-50%, with an average distribution of about 80% to 20%. Higher numbers of male clients were reported in Moscow and lower ones in Vladivostok. Such predominance of women among therapy clients is also recorded in other cultures, for example in the US (Denmark 1994). The main explanation for this skew was the influence of gender stereotypes:

Men do not come often because they have this myth that they have to cope with everything themselves, without any help. 'What kind of a man am I if I seek help?' (MF10)

¹⁴⁴ This chapter discusses only the counsellors' perspective since I did not interview their clients. However, exploring the clients' views could be a fruitful area for further research

I mean there are these prejudices, you know, that a man must do everything himself, that men don't cry and so on... and men are more susceptible to such public opinion changes than women. (MF1)

You know it is not in our mentality that men could easily complain about their problems, it's just not very acceptable... Men don't cry here... Women are more willing to admit their weaknesses... They are more ready to admit that they need help... And they come for help. (VF7)

These views are consistent with research in the western context (Dienhart 2001; Leong and Zachar 1999; McCarthy and Holliday 2004) which shows the existence of similar 'masculine' socialisation which can prevent men from considering therapy.

There are, however, other factors that can particularly increase the flow of female clients. Firstly, because where there is a demand, there is supply. As I mentioned Chapter 3 there are plenty of training programs in the 'psychological' market designed especially for women. For example, at least five of my interviewees talked about developing special training programs for women, on popular topics such as sexuality or femininity.¹⁴⁵ The main reason was the demand:

MK: Why did you choose to conduct this particular type of workshops?

MF: Well, first of all it is more profitable because women are sort of more ready and open for psychological help and men are not really. Well, at least there are many more women in the client flow.

MK: Why do so many training programs focus on women?

MF3: Well men don't really come you see... Out of 10 people there is usually one man... Even on those courses where men are specifically invited, it's all the same – they just don't go.

What also seems to contribute to the women's higher demand for psychology is the perpetuating of the old Soviet idea that women are 'better halves' and morally superior to men in Russian (Kay 2000; Kelly, C. 1992), therefore should provide emotional assistance and sooth their nearest and dearest (Tatarkovskaya and Ashwin 2006). Moreover, Faludi (1991) argues that women (in the USA) are constantly pressured by popular culture and by popular psychology literature to better themselves. 'Psychologists concluded that men are

¹⁴⁵ Some of these programmes (e.g. Image-Therapy: A Workshop on Style Changes, How to Seduce a Man, Effective Partnership Relations, Workshop on Developing a Sexy Voice etc.) were in the domain of popular psychology rather than therapy. Moreover, although I do not intend to doubt their therapeutic effectiveness, many of the workshops mentioned by my interviewees seemed to rely on and perpetuate very conventional ideas of masculinity, femininity, heterosexuality etc.

fine and the disappointment women feel is wholly self-generated... It's not the men who are "inadequate" ... it's just that the women's "expectations are distorted" (ibid.: 339-340). Thus women are expected to change and adjust. This 'trend' can also be detected in Russia and the evidence for it is the recent proliferation of self-help literature for women telling them how to better adapt their identity to the changing environment (see Karepova 2007). Thus, psychological services seem to have become a kind of commodity, a must-have purchase, but mostly for women. This 'need', however, is still seen as stemming from women's 'natural' interest in relationships:

A woman – and I'm talking about an average woman – is more concerned about relationships. This is the main issue with which people come for consultations – questions about relationships. Accordingly and naturally women are better at this. This sphere bothers them the most, they worry about it more than men do. (MF5)

Thus, what emerged from my data, is that not only are there many female clients, but they are also more encouraged to come to counselling by the growing supply of services, by the circulating discourses about improving the self and by constant advertising of these services. As my interviewees who worked with children and teenagers pointed out, women are also the ones who bring children to counselling. The fact that there are more women who are interested in counselling is not bad in itself. However, the constant emphasis on the fact that it is a 'female' domain may continue to prevent men who need help from considering counselling.

Apart from the gendered nature of clientele pool, two thirds of my interviewees also pointed out that their clients were mainly middle-class (e.g. successful professional and business women), and so-called VIP clients (women from the upper middle-class and elite). As one of my interviewees put it:

MF2: I mean working-class people usually don't come.

MK: Why is that so? Is it because of the price?

MF2: Well, it's hard to say because they don't come and so I know very little about them but I think that it is not only because of the price, but also because of the lack of motivation... I think it's just not common and they would not think of going to a psychologist...

In their study of attitudes towards seeking help for mental health issues Sheikh and Furnham (2000) point out that education played a significant role. Seeing as most middle-class people in Russia have higher education my findings would indirectly support these

research conclusions. My data, though, do not provide information to elaborate on this topic. However, although underplayed by the interviewee quoted above, the price of sessions seems to be a very significant reason for the lack of working-class clientele for private psychologists. As several of my interviewees pointed out, most of the state-funded (i.e. free of charge) psychological centres are full of clients.¹⁴⁶ Moreover some counsellors said that if they counselled for free they would have to work 24/7:

If these services were free, my office would be overcrowded with clients. People are ready. Ready to use these services, to seek counselling, but not ready to pay for them. (VF8)

Thus, apart from being reluctant to pay for the services (as I explained in Chapter 4), many people simply cannot afford long-term counselling. Psychological counselling in Russia then seemed to be a service provided for relatively well-off middle-class women by relatively well-off middle-class women.

Reskin and Roos (1990: 135-6) write that the growth in the number of female clients, ‘the expansion of women’s consumer roles’ and the ‘demand for specifically female labour’ can stimulate employers to hire more women workers. But do female clients prefer female counsellors? It is not quite clear whether all clients have definite preferences in relation to the gender of a therapist. Research (Gerhart and Lyle 2001; Pikus and Heavey 1996) found that more women preferred a female counsellor and the majority of men did not have a specific preference (however, the majority of those who had, preferred a woman). In my sample, the views of clients’ preferences varied (Table 5).

Table 5. Clients’ preferences regarding the therapist’s sex (according to therapists)

Client’s preferences according to therapists	Number of therapists who voiced this view
People prefer a counsellor of the same sex	6
Men prefer a female counsellor	5
Women prefer a male counsellor	2
Clients prefer a professional regardless of gender	3
Clients choose but preferences are not clear	4
They do not have a choice (in Vladivostok the majority of counsellors are female)	2
I don’t know	3

¹⁴⁶ These centres are mainly in Moscow and many are also funded by Moscow City Government (since the Moscow region is the wealthiest province in the country) as well as through state funding. In Vladivostok there are hardly any centres that provide quality counselling services free of charge.

These data, of course, are not statistically representative and this issue requires further investigation, but the counsellors' views still indicate some trends. For instance, they maintained that more people prefer a counsellor of the same sex, which means that because the majority of clients are women there should be a higher demand for female counsellors. Moreover, according to the therapists more men would prefer a female counsellor than a male counsellor. It was also mentioned that a female therapist would probably be preferred by clients of sexual minorities. Thus, there may be a slight prevalence in preferences for a female therapist.

When asked whether as female psychologists they experienced any difficulties counselling men or whether male clients had problems with them being female the answer was almost always negative:

MK: So men have no problem with going to a woman-counsellor?

MF2: Well, those who come, they don't. They don't treat it as something humiliating or problematic. I think they just see a specialist, a professional in me who could give them some information or knowledge that they lack.

In group counselling the presence of a male counsellor also did not seem to trigger the influx of male clients:

MK: Do more men come if a man leads the group?

MF3: Well, I work together with a male therapist. He also does some group training and programs which he conducts alone... and it's just the same. Very few men. Well maybe it's just his particular example but it shows that it is just the same.

Thus, male clients may not necessarily want to see a male therapist.

A key advantage feature of a female specialist mentioned by the majority of my interviewees was the importance of a female therapist's ability to provide 'maternal transference'. Several counsellors said that many people have problems with mother-child relationships in Russia. Moreover, maternal transference was not seen as a threat to anyone:

I think it is more natural and less suspicious if people turn to a woman counsellor. Because it's clear that they have transference as to a mother. Mother can't bring any harm (MF14)

She [the eldest counsellor in the centre] is the one people most often choose. So this means she inspires trust because she has the benefit of age and experience. In some sense she is not scary for a man – she is more of a mother... (MF7)

The latter quote, however, indicates that being a woman is not enough to provide ‘maternal transference’; one also has to be of a senior age. This interviewee, for instance, pointed out that it was her youth (and sexuality) that was sometimes a problem:

MF8: One tricky thing is that they [clients] very rarely agree to have a session together with their husbands... Well, you see, I’m a pretty young girl [28], so who knows what can happen...

MK: Oh, you mean they don’t trust you...

MF8: Yea... Well, I think they think - who knows what can happen... It is a sort of lack of trust in relation to their partners. So I have to juggle this situation and that’s why I usually have to work with women only ... (MF8)

Thus, because one’s identity is the main tool in this profession it sets its own limits and provides advantages in the existing social context. This meant that again, the older women had a certain benefit in this profession, at least compared to their younger colleagues.

Generally, research shows that the gender of a therapist matters for the process and the outcome of therapy (Glover and Wylie 1999; Jones and Zoppel 1982; Waller and Katzman 1996). However, Mogul (1982: 1) writes that ‘no specific conclusions as to optimal patient-therapist matches on the basis of therapist sex appear warranted’ because there are other variables such as the nature of the problem, the therapeutic approach used, the goals of the therapy, therapists’ experience and so on that can influence the outcome of therapy (see also Blow et al. 2008; Cottone et al. 2002). In my sample, although the trends were quite vague and my interviews did not provide all the necessary information (e.g. the accounts of clients) nevertheless, what emerged was that a middle-aged female counsellor enjoyed a slight advantage. However, the counsellors did not seem to openly acknowledge this fact. It was either masked by a rhetoric of ‘gender neutral professionalism’ (see previous section) or overshadowed by the stereotype that a man has got a career advantage in this profession (and therefore must be a better specialist). The latter point was reiterated by the counsellors and seemed to exist as a stereotype in the professional community discourse:

You know about three years ago at one psychological get-together I met a woman. She was a psychiatrist. She said the following thing: ‘Well, you know, of course, today in order to be a successful psychotherapist you have to be a forty-year old man, who sits in a leather armchair with a smart face, looks at the client and says “Aha...” from time to time’.

(MM1)

This fact was not really criticised or seen as prone to change. This probably indicates the fact that the ‘masculine cultural project’ of professionalisation (Davies, C. 1996) continues to exercise its power in this female dominated profession. As Bolton and Muzio (2007) argue, even numerically female-dominated professions undergo a process of cultural masculinisation, i.e. acquiring preferences for male characteristics. This, sadly, leads women to doubt their own position even in female-dominated professions. Moreover, it is not questioned, and as I show in the following section this state of affairs is deeply embedded and justified by the dominant gender regime in Russian society.

Gendered Views on Gender Roles: A Male Psychologist Is Not a Man?

I have already mentioned that counsellors, both male and female, seemed to have gendered views of their profession and their colleagues, although sometimes disguised by discourses of equality. But if professional views were sprinkled by gender neutrality, the ideas and stereotypes about women’s and men’s roles in society were much more explicitly gendered. In this section I investigate the relationship between conventional gender stereotypes and professional ideas, as well as consider their role and their persistence in Russian society.

As I demonstrated in the first section of this chapter, the women welcomed male specialists in psychology. There was little prejudice about men as *specialists* among female counsellors and no doubt in their capabilities to be good therapists. However, there were quite unflattering comments about men who work in this profession as *males*. The majority of women stated (more or less openly) that men in this sphere are too ‘feminine’:

I think that the therapeutic space is initially female gendered... in general I think that a man’s function is to conquer new space, new horizons and do something active. And here you have to sit in the room and engage with the inner space of a client – it is to my mind a naturally female

function and if a man does it he is usually a man of a special kind. In Jungian theory they are called ‘men with breasts’.

Another interviewee made an even stronger statement:

Well, I’ll be frank with you: I would never marry a man who was a psychologist and who was doing nothing else but counselling! I think, it’s a pathology... Because this profession is typical for women, to sort of wash the dirty linen, to search for some deep internal reasons for some situation... I don’t think it is a right thing to do for a man... (MF13)

Christine Williams (1992) argues that the most prejudice and discrimination against ‘non-traditional’ male workers in feminised professions comes from outside the profession, i.e. public opinion is quite brutal and judgemental towards men doing ‘women’s work’. Interestingly, in my sample, there seemed to be quite a strong prejudice from *within* the profession and most women doubted whether the content of the profession really suited a male gender role.

The accusations that men who do ‘women’s work’ are ‘failures’ and are not ‘real men’ is quite common (Evans, J. 1997; Meadus 2000). The question however, is: why are they considered failures? Research on female-dominated professions shows that the main reason seems to be that these men do not meet the ‘hegemonic masculinity’ standards. Either because they do ‘women’s work’ or/and because they do not possess ‘manly’ enough characteristics, they may be labelled effeminate or homosexual (Cross and Bagihole 2002; Evans, J. 2002; Henson and Rogers 2001; Meadus 2000; Sargent 2001; Williams, C. 1992). However, although similar accusations of ‘being too feminine’ were filed against the male psychologists in Russia, the contents of the ‘masculine ideal’ which emerged from my interviewees’ accounts seemed to be more complex.

Who Is a ‘Strong Man’? The Views on ‘Ideal’ Masculinity

Views of masculinity were quite contradictory among my female interviewees. On the one hand, women pointed out that the lack of ‘masculine’ qualities was not good for psychology because there are no male role models for clients. Indeed the notion that men in Russia are ‘too weak’ these days, and women’s longing for a ‘strong shoulder’ and virility is well-documented (Ashwin 2000a; 2000b; 2002; Kay 2000). As one of my interviewees said:

But I think one of the shortcomings of my profession is that I see strong men from their weak side you know.... You know sometimes I think there are no strong men left now at all... (VF7)

However, the contradiction with regard to the desired 'masculine' qualities emerged when the counsellors talked about why women could be attracted to male therapists. One of the reasons given was therapists' sensitivity:

The demographic situation worsens dramatically [with age]... and if a man by 40 has not become a drunk or hasn't died, it's something like... I don't know... He is worth his weight in gold and you should make sure you take care of this precious species... So when a male counsellor appears, handsome, smart, reasonable, attentive, and in the mind of a woman really ideal... not a drunk, who is sensitive and understands everything... Well, it's something really mesmerising! (MF12)

The interesting thing was that shortly before this, this interviewee labelled characteristics of sensitivity and understanding as inherently feminine. In fact, some of the 'typically masculine' activities were condemned by the same interviewee as 'barbaric':

Well, for example go visit any concert or exhibition you'll see only woman... well, of course other... well, more barbarian pastimes like some football [laughs] there you'll see more men of course. (MF12)

Thus, the 'macho' man who was an avid football fan was not the ideal. Finally, many women pointed out that there are fewer men than women in Russia and there are even fewer 'real men'. And interestingly, the most common way to deal with this 'shortage' of men was to take care of and pamper them:

We have a catastrophic disaster with our gene pool so to say. Well, we are really short of men... We should actually take care of them, cultivate them, nurture them [laughs]. (MF1)

I would say that recently we have more male clients in our programs... but you know we need to still pamper men here, bring them up... (VF7)

This does not sound like the 'right' way to cultivate virility. Moreover, as I have mentioned before, if men are so 'feminised' in this profession how are they supposed to be examples of virility and masculine ideals? Thus, the 'ideal' of masculinity seemed to be

quite inconsistent and contradictory, because of the obviously competing images of a ‘strong shoulder’ and a ‘sensitive gentleman’.

This inconsistency may have several explanations. First, as Anne White (2005) points out, when young Russian women were surveyed about typical gender characteristics, the picture of a man in the questionnaires had very little in common with what a ‘typical’ Russian man is. This led to the conclusion that women were describing just a male ‘stereotype’. Thus, it may be that women in the interviews were constructing an ‘ideal man’ in whom all the contradictory traits could be reconciled. This can be backed up by the fact that when women talked about *individual* male counsellors whom they knew (as opposed to male counsellors in general) they did not seem to have problems with their masculinity:

I would say that they [men who do psychology] have psychological problems themselves... But it’s my personal subjective opinion... Well, in fact, I can say nothing bad about Mr. X [her male colleague]... I think he’s achieved great success... (MF13)

Another explanation of the contradictory descriptions of masculinity can be drawn from Kay’s (2000) work. She points out that a common idea of how to deal with gender inequalities proposed by her Russian interviewees was a ‘proper upbringing’. The idea was that it was ‘not so much [the teaching] of gender characteristics *per se*, but rather of proper gender roles and relations between sexes and the cultivation of chivalry and etiquette’ (ibid.: 98). In other words, a man is expected to be masculine and strong, but if he is well-mannered and well brought up he will also be gentle and attentive.

I think both of the aforementioned arguments (Kay 2000; White, A. 2005) to a certain extent illuminate the inconsistency in the women’s opinions. However, I suggest that there is one other way to understand the competing ‘demands’ regarding masculinities. I would argue that in my sample the main characteristic that came to be associated with a ‘strong shoulder’ was the ability to be a breadwinner. There are two reasons which lead me to conclude this. First, the main justification cited by my interviewees for why men do not ‘fit’ into this profession was that they could not earn enough money to provide for a family:

The profession of a psychologist is not perceived by the average man as the job that can earn you big money. With this in mind, we can see that if a man chooses psychology, then it’s not his only job... Men need to provide for the family... Men have different tasks than women do. (VF4)

Earnings were given by both men and women as the most obvious reason for men's reluctance to choose psychology as a career:

Many young men don't see a future in this profession in terms of making a living and moreover in terms of fulfilling a male role – caring for a family, providing for a family and so on. It is very difficult, I personally experienced that having two university degrees and a rich life experience, at some point I felt that I didn't fulfil that male role, that I simply can't do it. It took me quite a bit of time to take that bar and to live through that first period, to get on my feet and start earning... (MM1)

Here, it is seen that the main facet of the masculine role is to earn. Second, although one of the 'accusations' was that men were too feminine, the main way in which men who work in this sphere were condemned was income-wise:

But a man coming to psychology is something... Well, it's not a very manly thing you know... Men should be earning money. I don't think there is much chance to earn really good money here... They are those men who haven't really learned how to earn good money, or those who are still in search of themselves and they decided to try this sphere... I see such men... (VF7)

What this interviewee meant by 'manly' was not any specific masculine or feminine characteristic; rather, it seemed that the ability to earn money was seen as the most 'manly' characteristic of a man. This, I suggest, reconciles the inconsistencies between the 'desired' male ideal: a man should be gentle and attentive, and be a 'strong shoulder' through *providing*, i.e. by earning money. This is also consistent with the existing male breadwinner ideology to which, as is clear from the above quotes, both the men and women in my sample adhered.

One more indirect evidence of the fact that the ability to provide was seen as the most important male quality was that the men in my sample did not experience any negative feelings about being in a female-dominated profession. Some research shows that it is not easy for men to adjust psychologically to working in a female-dominated environment as they are often regarded as 'effeminate' (Kauppinen-Tropainen and Lammi 1993). There are various strategies to deal with the uneasiness of being in a non-traditional occupation, for example, emphasising or making visible masculine characteristics, distancing oneself from the women at work, pointing out differences in roles and the better quality of men's work and so on (Cross and Bagilhole 2002; Henson and Rogers 2001;

Lupton 2000; Simpson 2004; Williams, C. 1992; 1995b). As I pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, redefining psychology as ‘male work’ may be one such ‘coping’ strategy. However, the men whom I interviewed did not seem to ‘suffer’ that much in this female-dominated occupation. I suggest that one of the reasons they did not, was that they were well-established high-earning specialists and in fact this ability to earn seemed to be the most important ‘masculine’ characteristic for all three of my male interviewees.¹⁴⁷ As one of my interviewees pointed out, the pressure of being a breadwinner could potentially outweigh any stereotypes:

Men choose the professions which allow them to earn more money – as they have to provide for their families. If more money can be earned in the army – they will go to work in the army. If the school would provide such opportunities – they will go to work there. I think that a lot of times, their own preferences are not criteria for them, the only criterion is the necessity to keep the family’s pot boiling. It’s their priority. (VM1)

Thus, the feminised character of the counselling profession did not seem to bother my male interviewees that much because all three of them were successful professionals which meant that they successfully fulfilled the ‘masculine’ role of breadwinner. This is consistent with scholars who argue that ‘work providing a sufficient financial base to assume the male breadwinner role is a core component of hegemonic masculine identity’ (Connell 1995; Henson and Rogers 2001: 226). The pressure of being a breadwinner in Russia is exacerbated by the *continuous* economic and financial instability which together with the existing gender norms seems to make the ability to make money the most ‘virile’ characteristic of its time.

The Working of the Male Breadwinner Ideology

The working of the male breadwinner ideology had a deep impact on the concept of work among my interviewees. For example, it can cause discrimination and justify inequality (see Chapters 3 and 4). In fact, when women talked about a male advantage it was seen as something given and natural. None of my interviewees used the term inequality or

¹⁴⁷ There may of course be other reasons why gender stereotypes may be less pressuring for men in psychology. For instance the counselling profession is still of a much higher status and probably less rigidly associated with ‘femininity’ than other female-dominated spheres such as teaching, nursing or clerical jobs. This is the case for various reasons: because it is relatively new in Russia and has not been rigidly defined yet, because psychology and psychotherapy are (or used to be) male-dominated in the west, because counselling is related to medicine which is, although numerically female-dominated, still considered a gender-neutral profession. The pressure may also be less because many psychologists do not work in organisational settings; rather they have their private practice.

discrimination or criticised the existing practices, which echoes the arguments of other researchers of Russia (e.g. Egorova 1999; Kozina and Zhidkova 2006) who found that women themselves justified sex discrimination.

Horizontal segregation in the profession was also justified to a certain extent through the male breadwinner ideology. For instance at least half of my respondents pointed out that there are more men who work in organisational (business) psychology. Interestingly enough, not just gender stereotypical characteristics (e.g. the need to be assertive, competitive etc.), but also the level of wages was used to justify horizontal job segregation. Many women said that it was 'quite understandable' that men work in organisational counselling, since it pays better and men *must* earn money:

And of course people leave [individual counselling]. They try here and there and then they leave for business training or some other job... And there are many boys in business counselling and I can relate you know... First of all they have to provide for the family... (MF14)

There are also quite a few men in business training. I have the feeling that men tend to go to those areas where it is possible to earn money. (MF3)

Thus, horizontal gender segregation in the profession was mainly explained through the necessity to provide. The segmentation of tasks and the concentration of women in lower prestige and lower segments of the professions has been widely discussed in western scholarship (e.g. Pierce 1996; Reskin and Roos 1990; Riska 2001) and is said to exist in Russia (Einhorn 1993; Khotkina 1994). The problematic thing is that women themselves reproduce and in a way support this state of affairs. Moreover, the fact that women are not meant to be breadwinners was (maybe unintentionally) naturalised:

As to women they are more likely to stay longer in this sphere [counselling]... Probably, because of some genetically encoded patience... Because a man can hardly be satisfied with the little money which he'll earn for several years, he would hardly be patient enough to stay in this profession. (VF4)

This quote exemplifies how deeply essentialist gender discourses are engrained in people's consciousness. Women's compliance with earning little money for many years was attributed to their 'genetic patience'. The fact that a man could not be satisfied with such earnings was also clearly seen as normal and quite natural.

The fact that Russian women endorse the male breadwinner model is well-documented in the literature (Ashwin 2000b; 2002; 2006a; 2006b; Kay 2000; Kiblitkaya 2000b). Many scholars have argued that adhering to these stereotypes do neither men nor women any good. For instance, endorsing this ideology results in women submitting to the double burden model: women are still responsible for the household and still have to work in paid employment as it is almost impossible to survive on a single wage in contemporary Russia (Clarke 1999a). Holding on to the male breadwinner ideology results in women giving up their career aspirations in favour of their husbands and partners (Ashwin 2002). Moreover, it puts a lot of pressure on urban men and renders money as their only contribution to the family (Ashwin and Lytkina 2004; Kay 2007). The interesting thing in my sample was that many women actually had quite high earnings and provided for the family. Several women were well-known specialists in the field and respected within the professional community. But even those women still dwelled on the idea of the necessity for men to earn. In the same vein, other research (Motiejunaite and Kravchenko 2008) also indicates that supporting a male breadwinner model contradicts the realities of life in Russia. For instance, one-income families where a woman is the head of the household are very wide-spread in Russia. And in households with two adults the more common model is that of a dual breadwinner. The question then is, why in these changing circumstances do women still stick to these ideas?

Scholars (Ashwin 2002; Lissyutkina 1993) have pointed out that women in Russia conceptualise work differently from their counterparts in the west. As a backlash to the Soviet regime where work was a duty, and to the images of the Soviet 'superwoman' (who was supposed to work and be responsible for the household and children), allowing oneself not to work was seen as liberating in the new Russia (Kay 2002; Occhipinti 1996). As Kay (2000: 91) writes: 'whilst the ideas of female strength and responsibility might be regarded as positive and empowering by western feminists, for Russian women these images have far more negative connotations'. Thus, one of the main reasons for Russian women's 'conventionalism' cited by the scholars is that after 1989, people in Russia were 'eager to divorce [themselves] from and cut any ties with the Soviet past' (Kay 2000: 26).

I do not contest this argument, but I also suggest that the persistence of the male breadwinner ideology today represents more than just a backlash to the socialist regime. Drawing partially on secondary literature and partially on my data and my conversations with women outside the interviews, I would agree with the argument that women in Russia do not see the dual-breadwinner model as liberating (Lissyutkina 1993). But to take the argument further, I think that today endorsing the male breadwinner ideology seems to be women's last chance for defending their 'freedom'. For instance, Kay (2000) shows that

women in Russia are still seen and consider themselves to be responsible for a huge variety of duties – children, household, morality etc. Men on the other hand, although criticised by women for being weak (Ashwin 2000a), are argued to have been ‘damaged’ by the Soviet ideology in terms of their masculinity (Kiblitckaya 2000a; Meshcherkina 2000) and by war in terms of numbers, and are constructed to be in need of ‘saving’ as was exemplified in my interviewees’ accounts. The publicly perceived way out is to ‘nurture’ the fragile men and let them regain their status. It is proposed that this can happen through women’s submission to men’s authority and reinstating men’s status privileges (Kay 2000: 93). In other words, women are not very demanding (and are encouraged to be less demanding, not least in therapy sessions¹⁴⁸) of men in terms of their roles:

Women got used to living without men, and now they have their terms and demands for what men should be like... it’s clear that all these specific Russian problems [wars, shortage of men] imprint on the present situation. That’s why [in sessions] we learn to respect the partner... You see, a woman who doesn’t respect her husband, cannot bring up a mature son, as he just doesn’t know what example to follow... That’s why our men at the sessions are gradually growing so to speak, and our women are taught to look at them with respect. (VF1)

Therefore, women seem to be willing (or at least are told) to be patient with men. Against this background of everything being demanded from a woman and little from a man it seems logical that *women want men to work*. The idea of the male breadwinner seems to be the last male responsibility which women do not want to allow men to be relieved of. As one of the Kay’s interviewees (2000: 87) said:

Our [Russian] men have got so used to the easy life that women are left having to take everything on. Do they even go out and earn money? No, not even that! Even that is up to the woman, let her work and race around.

Thus, it seems that women have the idea at the back of their minds that if a woman starts earning an equal or bigger share of money in the household, it will put more pressure

¹⁴⁸ Feminist psychology criticises mainstream psychological approaches for maintaining and reproducing existing power relations and gender orders. They argue that counsellors should assist clients and empower them through critically examining societal gender roles, their structural meanings and implications (see e.g. Bohan 1993; Dienhart 2001; Kagan and Tindall 2003; Ussher 1992; Worrell and Remer 2003). However, none of my interviewees practiced any form of feminist psychology. The majority practiced Family Systems Therapy, Gestalt, Body-Oriented Therapy, Psychodrama and so on. Moreover as I have mentioned, many provided training based on very conventional gender ideas.

on her and lift the pressure from the man. Research shows that most of the household work in Russia is done by women even in dual-breadwinner families (Dadaeva 2005) and it does not look probable that men will suddenly start sharing household work. The parental roles are also very limited for men and it is the woman who is expected to take the main responsibility for the child care (see Ashwin and Lytkina 2004; Kay 2007). Thus, the 'label' equal/dual breadwinner (even discursively) seems to mean doing it all for women. So it is not that women do not want to be 'equal' breadwinners in the family - in fact they are. It seems that they are just not willing to surrender the fantasy of this last bastion of male responsibility. This argument may seem to echo the one about why women see the ability not to work as liberating (see Lissyuitkina 1993); however, made almost twenty years later, it signifies a deep social, political and economic crisis.

Since the demise of the Soviet Union there has been virtually no political talk on equality matters (Shlapentokh 1999) which is in part a backlash against Soviet 'over-emancipation' (Ashwin 2000a; Posadskaya 1994a). There has been no strong feminist movement as there was in the west (Kay 2000). There is no gender mainstreaming, no promotion of equal opportunities or of political correctness in contemporary Russia. According to recent polls (Ordzhonikidze 2008) and the accounts of my interviewees, people have no belief in the effectiveness of legal regulation. The positive elements of the socialist past (e.g. elaborate welfare system, management quotas) have been lost due to economic conditions or purged under the aegis of a backlash (i.e. we have to get rid of everything connected with communism). However, ironically the positive elements of western development - such as feminist thinking or equal opportunities legislation - were dismissed on the same basis (e.g. Russian women had already had 'equality' under communism which was a double burden and now they do not want it anymore). So, sadly, what seems to be left, is the controversial and damaging legacy of the socialist past encapsulated in conventional gender regimes and the imperfect 'features' adopted from western capitalist models such as a wide-spread individualism and neo-liberal ideology. Thus the continuous refusal of Russian women to embrace an equal-breadwinner model¹⁴⁹ – even at the level of discourse – can be seen not as 'conventionalism' or 'backwardness', but as a sort of resistance to imposed burdens and at the same time as a way of adjusting to the situation of an unstable, developing economy, with little equal opportunities.

¹⁴⁹ The persistence of the male breadwinner model may mean that earning money will be (and is) the only duty that men put on themselves *voluntarily*. And since it seems to be the most important one in the unstable economy it will legitimise their limited involvement with for example housework or child rearing. This situation also creates a vicious circle of marginalising women's achievements and the value of their work, not least by women themselves.

Thus, although both men and women do not benefit from the (re)production of a male breadwinner ideology, it seems to persist. It persists as women's way of adjusting to the existing situation and, as an indication of the lack of any significant changes towards endorsing equal opportunities and gender equality in Russian society.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I considered the counsellors' views of the role of gender in the profession and how these views influence their experiences. I argued that not only are gender relations at work a product of the professional setting but they are also a result of a much deeper influence of the dominant gender, economic and political regimes.

What emerged from my interviewees' accounts was that the 'masculine professional project'¹⁵⁰ (Davies, C. 1996; Witz 1992) is exercising significant influence in this female-dominated profession. On the one hand there was no consensus among my interviewees on the 'gender' of the profession itself, but it was not uniformly labelled as a 'female profession'. However, though many said that gender did not matter as long as one was a good professional, in fact what emerged from my interviews was that men were welcomed for their 'maleness' and were seen to be 'more professional' than women, while 'excessively feminine' behaviour was condemned.

These gendered views also had implications for professional practices which led to female disadvantage. Women seemed to facilitate and reproduce the advantage of male counsellors by their actions (e.g. hiring preferences for men regardless of qualification, embracing the male breadwinner ideology and 'understanding' the necessity of men to take better jobs) and through sustaining the discourse of 'neutrality' and embracing a masculine culture of professionalism. Women also strongly adhered to the cultural stereotype of a male breadwinner. However, the counsellors did not see men's advantage in making a career in this profession as a consequence of these gendered practices or discourses; rather, they attributed it to the low numbers of men in this profession and saw certain 'bonuses' that men had as natural and, sometimes, even fair. Acker (2006: 441) argues that inequality is (re)produced in organizations 'in the daily activities of working and organising the work' through what she calls inequality regimes, i.e. 'interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities

¹⁵⁰ 'Professional project' is a phrase used by Witz (1992: 5) to describe 'the concrete and historically bounded character of the profession' and she defines professional projects as 'strategies of occupational closure which aim for an occupational monopoly over the provision of certain skills and competencies in a market for services'. I discuss the problematic aspects of the 'masculine professional project' in detail in the next chapter.

within particular organizations' (ibid.: 443). As analysed in this chapter, this framework is very much applicable to my data and it is clear that professional gender inequalities among therapists were constructed in interactions, through 'conventional' gender practices and discourses that were not questioned.

Women also did not see the fact that the profession was female-dominated as positive. This seemed to be partially due to their worry about the patients' need of choice of therapists' sex. However, women also thought that the presence of more men would enhance the image of the profession. Cejka and Eagly (1999: 422) showed that 'high wages and prestige are associated with occupations that are thought to require masculine personal characteristics' by both male and female participants. Although there was no evidence that men make better specialists than women, this belief persisted.

There was also no compelling evidence as to whether male or female specialists would be preferred by clients. According to my interviewees' accounts, women seemed to constitute the majority of clients, both in individual and in group therapy. The majority of clients were relatively well-off middle-class women (as were the majority of the therapists). The counsellors maintained that women prefer a female therapist and men often did too. According to my data, it seemed that it was a middle-aged woman who enjoyed a slight advantage in terms of clients' preferences. This however, was not picked up on by the counsellors themselves, who underplayed women's advantages and potential in this profession and held a belief that men generally are more successful in their career and this is not going to change. It seemed that the fact that male therapists are generally more successful career-wise got conflated with the idea that they are therefore better therapists.

Gendered views of/in the profession were closely intertwined with and influenced by the general societal views of gender roles. Though women had positive views of male counsellors as specialists they were strongly critical of their 'maleness'. In fact at first glance the image of the 'ideal man' seemed to be quite contradictory: on the one hand, women did not seem to want a brutal 'macho', on the other, they complained about men who do psychology being 'too feminine'. As Kay (2000: 89) argues, the conflicting influences of the Soviet work ideology and the influence of essentialist theories of gender resulted in 'contradictions and inconsistencies often displayed by Russian women in their attitudes to gender'. This explanation partially applied in my study. I also suggested that the seemingly contradictory attitudes to men and maleness can be explained through scrutinising the meaning of masculinity in the contemporary Russian context. Drawing on my data, the ability to earn/be a breadwinner seems to be seen as the 'most masculine' characteristic of a contemporary Russian man. I argued that the persistent adherence of women to the male breadwinner ideology may function as a way of resisting yet another

burden being put on women's shoulders (i.e. being the main provider). It also signifies the current deep social equality and economic crisis, and women's disbelief in any potential change in men or in society.

Ely and Meyerson (2000) argue that in order to achieve a change of gender inequality in organizations it is important to constantly maintain the (discursive) focus on gender. In other words, equality at work requires a lot of work. In the same vein, in this chapter I showed that the absence of the gender narrative or perpetuating essentialist discourses on gender in the work of Russia psychologists sustained inequalities. In the next chapter I analyse the impact and the role of the state, organisational commitment and the agency of the professional community in stimulating change in the profession.

Chapter 6: Organising Psychology: State, Organizations and Gender on a Professionalisation Quest

Introduction

In the previous chapters I analysed the educational, employment, and gender contexts of this profession. In this last chapter, in order to further understand the development of the counselling profession in the past twenty years or so, I examine the relationship between the state and the profession, consider the development of professional associations, and investigate what implications the present state of the professionalisation of psychology has on the development of the field and on professionals. I investigate these processes of professionalisation through analysing the counsellors' attitudes and opinions on these matters. It has to be noted that when it came to thinking about professionalisation and the ways in which it occurs, there was relatively little difference between how male and female counsellors talked about it. Thus in my analysis of various issues in this chapter gender was not always an obvious key factor. However, at the end of this there were some professional and organisational issues where gender mattered, which I discuss at the end of this chapter. I also consider possible reasons for the seeming gender neutrality of professionalisation discourses.

Professional regulations and their originators (e.g. organizations, state) play a major role in the process of professionalisation (Balzer 1996; Lunt 1999; Moore 1970). The relationship between the professions and the state in socialist countries before 1989 was very different from that in the Anglo-American context: the state was the major source of direct professional regulations (Balzer 1996; Jones 1991; Macdonald 1996). Some studies predicted that with the fall of the Soviet Union the power of the state would be decentralised and the professions would develop more independently (Jones and Krause 1991). However, little is known about whether this is so. In the previous chapters I outlined some of the links between the existing professional regulation of psychology and the patterns of training and work which have developed in this profession. In this chapter I analyse why professionalisation in the 'Anglo-American way', i.e. through the setting-up of professional organisations, licensing and credentials, does not occur in the same way in the contemporary Russian context. I shall argue that even though the presence of the state in professional matters has lost some of its visibility, it is still very much alive and has a great impact on professionalisation. I also show that in a situation of under-regulation at a

formal level there are still ‘alternative’ ground rules for professional exclusion, which are developed through discursive and everyday practices within the profession, and which have as much influence on gender patterns in the profession as ‘formal’ occupational closure practices.¹⁵¹

In the first section, I outline the differences in the professionalisation process in the Russian and Anglo-American context and analyse the impact of the Soviet legacy and the current context on the development of professional regulation in counselling and psychotherapy. I then move to a discussion of the existing professional organizations, my interviewees’ attitudes towards these establishments and the reasons for the specificities of their development in Russia. Finally, I consider the position of women in the organizations and analyse the development of ‘grassroots’ professionalisation discourses and practices and their genderisation.

The Process of Professionalisation

As I pointed out in Chapter 1 the development of counselling and psychotherapy in Russia has by no means reached its closure. There has been a rapid development of publicity around psychological issues, psychologists are invited as experts to express opinions on all manner of issues, the number of psychologists and psychological centres seems to increase every year, and the number of clients is also rising according to my interviewees. As they pointed out, people have become more aware of the availability and purpose of psychological services. Despite this, the main source of ‘knowledge’ about psychologists is the media which has been given credit for popularising psychology but has also been criticised for offering a rather distorted view of psychology to people (see Chapter 1). While it is obvious that the image of the profession, though controversial, is changing and gaining more recognition, the question that remains is whether anything has changed in the past twenty years in terms of the official professionalisation processes?

Models of Professionalisation

There are many approaches to the understanding of the making of a profession (for classifications see e.g. Abbott 1988; Curnow and McGonigle 2006; MacDonald 1995).

¹⁵¹ Professional /occupational closure is a concept widely used in the sociology of professions and usually signifies the process of limiting access to an occupation through establishing a monopoly of services and rules of exclusion based on various credentials, e.g. qualifications, certification, licensing, membership in associations, etc. (Abbott 1988; Ackroyd and Bolton 1999; Collins 1990; Witz 1990).

These models look at different dimensions of professionalisation, focusing, for example, on identifying various traits and characteristics that distinguish professions from occupations (e.g. Etzioni 1969; Goode 1957), on the process through which occupations can achieve the status of a profession (e.g. Wilensky 1964), on the issues of power and/or the interaction of factors which make professionalisation possible (e.g. Friedson 1970, Hughes 1958; Larson 1977). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to engage in the analysis of each approach, but for the purposes of this chapter, I shall summarise several significant points in thinking about professionalisation. Typically professionalisation (in the Anglo-American context) is described as a process which may involve the following traits and/or actions (Balzer 1996: 4; Curnow and McGonigle 2006: 289; Moore 1970: 5-6):

- A full-time occupation (one's main source of income) distinguishes itself from others, claiming a particular field of expert knowledge;
- Entering a profession means going through specialised and (usually) long training;
- Professional activity is usually service-oriented and aims to gain clients' trust through providing high quality service;
- Quality is achieved through following professional and ethical codes often reinforced by well established professional organizations and communities;
- A profession may seek legal protection and/or restrictions (e.g. licensing) from the state to achieve monopoly in the market and further boost its status;
- When established, professions usually enjoy autonomy and self-regulation.

The emergence of the above characteristics is a process which occurs as the profession develops, so effectively professionalisation can be seen as a struggle for occupational closure (Witz 1990: 675, see also Abbott 1988; Ackroyd and Bolton 1999; Collins 1990). In the sections below I shall explore the specificity of some of the above elements of professionalisation in the Russian context.

One of the main points of emphasis is that (generally) in an Anglo-American context the professions initially develop separately from the state (e.g. forming communities and organizations, regulating entry and quality standards etc.) and then negotiate state involvement for further benefits. However, Balzer (1996: 4) writes that such models of professionalisation are very context specific.¹⁵² He emphasises that in the different countries of continental Europe and in Russia the relationship between the state

¹⁵² Even the word 'professionalisation' in Russian is a direct translation of the English equivalent (*professionalizatsiya*). According to the definition of this word in the dictionary of foreign words (Bulyko 2004) and in a sociological encyclopaedia (Greetsanov et al. 2003) professionalisation is a process of becoming a professional in a certain sphere or the process of attracting more highly qualified specialists into a particular profession.

and professions was (and is) quite different, ‘stemming from their origins in systems of formal academic training administered by the government’ (Balzer 1996: 6). Therefore, he argues, the professions can have a different route of development. For instance the professions in France, Germany, and Russia were bound by initial state control and had to struggle for their autonomy, but at the same time trying to preserve a certain degree of state support. Professions in all contexts may go through a process of negotiating the amount of state involvement; however, the stages of professional development at which these negotiations happen and the matters that are actually negotiated may differ depending on the political, cultural and economic environments.

As scholars (Krause 1991; MacDonald 1996) argue, there is a continuum of the extent of state influence on professional projects from being entirely regulated by the government to a virtual lack of any involvement at all. An extreme level of state involvement was witnessed during the socialist regime. Heitlinger (1991; 1995) gives an example of medicine in the Czech Republic, where all professional matters, from policy making and finance to determining the production and provision of medical supplies, were entirely controlled by the state. ‘Socialist medicine was dependent on the state for overall financing, provision of the workplace, medical supplies and technology, clientele, salaries, medical education, licence to practise, and an adequate supply of subordinate health workers’ (Heitlinger 1995: 215). A similar control over medicine existed in the USSR (Field 1991). Krause (1991: 28) writes that in state socialist societies there was a three-dimensional relationship between the professions and the state (and this applied to all professions): there was a directly-proportional relationship between party membership and a worker’s career progression; there were state policies that had major impact on professional matters; and the party leaders were able to authorise or restrict the organization of professional associations.

Jones and Krause (1991) proposed that after the fall of the Soviet Union there would be a decentralisation of decision-making from the state which would have several consequences: an increase in specialists’ capacity to claim authority over decisions; the improvement of opportunities for the development of professional organizations; the development of the private sphere and the possibility to provide professional services outside of state institutions. Indeed, some of these predictions came true. Today, one is free to run a private business in Russia; there is freedom to establish professional organizations; there is no longer a system of mandatory allocation of graduates and so on. However, as I argue in this chapter, the legacy of the past continues to exercise a major influence on the development and professionalisation of occupations after 1991.

The Effects of Low Levels of Regulation

Scholars point out that the professions ‘generally seek to establish a legal monopoly through licensure’ (MacDonald 1996: 100) in order to protect clients from receiving poor service (Danish and Smyer 1981) and in order to control/limit the number of specialists who enter the field, thus raising the status of the professionals (Kleiner 2000). When asked about professional regulation, the majority of my interviewees said that psychological counselling was poorly regulated and named its under-regulation as a main reason for the stagnation of the development of the profession. The counsellors pointed out that there were many specialists who, although in possession of an officially recognised diploma, provided very low quality services. Many felt that a lack of licensing allowed the presence of unqualified specialists in the market which led to several consequences. First, the majority of my interviewees said that the foremost negative effect of others’ malpractice was the damage done to clients:

Some clients come to us after they have visited other psychotherapists. And it’s not the worst if that therapy just didn’t help them or traumatised them in some sense... One can get through that. But when it just destroyed their lives completely! I don’t know... (MF5)

Licensing here [in this profession] is a kind of a filter. To sort out charlatans and scam artists... Because honestly saying I have a lot of cases when a person comes after an unsuccessful therapy... (VF5)

The counsellors believed that the poor quality of service and the lack of a legal means to control it damaged the image of the profession:

There are a lot of poor specialists and charlatans who discredit and damage the reputation of this profession, they create a bad image of a counsellor in people’s eyes. (MF7)

[Licensing] could have filtered out those who enter our sphere without having some basic training. A psychologist can’t be called to account. One such pseudo-psychologist – I know him – he doesn’t even have a basic psychological education – he is just a successful businessman who’s attended a couple of psychological workshops. And everybody knows that there’s no control, no measures preventing such people from

doing counselling, from sneaking into this profession. They spoil the image of the profession, you know... (VF8)

My interviewees also mentioned that legal neglect and lack of control allowed the ‘alternative’ services to pass under the label of psychology:

In our city the place for psychological centres is occupied by magic salons... And you call the directory line and ask for the details of psychological help specialists and, trust me, the first results of the search system will be magic salons... (VM1)

A growing body of research describes the rise of para-psychological services in post-1989 Russia (Lindquist 2002; 2006; Kertman 2006). My interviewees also admitted that magic was very popular and wide-spread and explained this phenomenon by the low psychological literacy of people and the general tendency of Russians towards ‘magical thinking’. But mainly the counsellors felt that the lack of laws and licenses allowed magic salons to operate under the guise of psychological services which led to a boom of charlatans and magic services. The interesting thing, however, was that the counsellors’ attitudes to para-psychological services were rather equivocal. Although the majority said that explicit witchcraft and wizardry (e.g. palm reading or getting rid of the evil eye) definitely had nothing to do with psychology, some saw the line between certain spiritual practices and psychology as rather blurred. For instance, several participants engaged in transpersonal and esoteric therapy techniques in their practices and did not deny the ‘shamanistic’ aspect of their psychological practice. One of the counsellors who previously worked as a healer before getting a degree in psychology, pointed out that she used a lot of similar techniques (e.g. Tarot cards) in her psychological practice.¹⁵³ Although the counsellors did not fully approve of magic services in the market, they seemed to be less critical of magicians than of those who actually had a degree in psychology but did not bother to upgrade their level of knowledge and provide a quality service.

Technically, the minimum quality of specialists is regulated by the state – in order to be a psychologist one has to complete a degree program and receive a state approved diploma. However, for several reasons, this did not guarantee the quality of professionals. First, as my interviewees pointed out, the quality of the education can be rather low depending on the university (see Chapter 3). Second, there are educational facilities in Russia which simply provide invalid or fake diplomas:

¹⁵³ It is out of the scope of my work to explore these issues further but it is a fruitful area for further research.

So I phoned them up [the institution that offered her a job] and this woman said: ‘Oh, yes, yes! We have clinical psychology degrees!’ Well, at that point I knew that it was all a big fat lie - there wasn’t such a thing in Vladivostok! There was no educational institution there at that time which was entitled legally to issue such a diploma... So they have no licence, no programme – no anything! But people go there and pay their money to study and get some allegedly state standard diploma which in reality just looks like a real one but it’s not... So this is of course a disaster... Because there are a lot of institutions and programs like this, of a very low quality... (MF14)

Even though there is a legal requirement for universities to provide only licensed educational programmes there seems to be very little (legal) control over these requirements and how they are exercised. Moreover, specific therapy training or the contents of CPD programs which are offered by private companies and institutions are not certified or controlled in any way. They are required to be registered as a private business but once they are, its programs are not scrutinised in any way (either by the state or by a professional organization). Thus, although university standards of education are regulated there are a number of flaws in them. Finally, even if one studies in a highly ranked university, getting a diploma does not perform the same function as licensing can do, i.e. it does not certify one’s counselling/psychotherapeutic ability. It certifies theoretical knowledge of (counselling) psychology (as I explained in Chapter 3) and there is no further control or certification of the ways in which a specialist applies this knowledge.

There are various concerns about whether statutory registering and licensing ‘weed out’ malpractice and benefit clients or whether they are used by the professional elite as a tool to gain power (see e.g. Hogan, D. 1979; Mowbray 1995: 79). In my sample, the counsellors seemed to share the view that licensing *would* increase the quality of services. They were also genuinely concerned about the harm done to clients as much as (and probably even more than) about establishing a monopoly over their services. They did not see licensing primarily as a tool for professional power. However, as much as the introduction of licensing was seen to be important, at the same time the counsellors remained doubtful about its applications and implications. The main questions were: who is going to regulate psychological counselling? What is going to be regulated and how? Will it have the desired effect? Some of these concerns were similar to those that exist in western society, others were rather specific to the Russian context.

The 'Dilemmas' of Licensing

The majority of my interviewees (23 out of 26) held ambivalent attitudes towards the idea of certification and/or licensing. Both male and female counsellors expressed similar concerns: there were no significant gender differences in their responses. There seemed to be several problematic aspects to licensing regarding its development, implementation and effects. The counsellors were concerned with several issues: what is going to be licensed, will the licensing have the desired effect and who is going to be responsible for licensing.

First of all, the psychologists took issue with what exactly was going to be regulated and what consequences this would have. The question of whether licensing improves the quality of service has been debated in the Anglophone literature and many of the issues debated in the western context were echoed by my interviewees. For instance, Kleiner (2000: 198) argues that there is little evidence that tougher regulations have an immediate positive effect on quality. This was also one of the concerns of my interviewees:

I don't think that it [licensing] will bring more knowledge into anyone's head... But everybody knows that licensing will not in any degree influence psychologists' education level! (MF13)

As Daniel Hogan (1979) argues, there is a need to 'recognize that licensing laws are not meant to ensure a high level of professional competence, only that a practitioner is not likely to harm the public' (Hogan, D. 1979 cited in Danish and Smyer 1981: 20). However, while some interviewees doubted the potential of licensing to improve one's knowledge, most of the counsellors were at least positive that these requirements would eliminate some malpractice and ensure a certain level of quality. The complete absence of any assessment of quality of a specialist after s/he graduates from university was seen as damaging the profession.

Another concern was that even though one might have a license, this does not necessarily prevent mistakes or malpractice 'behind closed doors':

I think, in fact, that our Russian experience and foreign practices show that it [licensing] is mainly useless... How would you check? (VF5)

You see – once the doors are closed we are free to do whatever – no one can really control this... It's just the inner responsibility... and if one doesn't have that, that's really bad... (VF7)

This argument is surely relevant in any cultural context. There are, however, certain ways in which the Soviet past worsened the relationship between formal regulations and actual quality of services. It could be argued that the Soviet over-regulation of professional practices in fact contributed to the rise of corruption and the decrease of the quality of offered services (although it was meant to do exactly the opposite). For instance, as Field (1991) argues, the state regulation of the distribution of medical services and of medical practitioners' wages (the measures that were meant to increase (e)quality of services) did not at all ensure that patients received high-quality care. In fact, equal, but very low, salaries for doctors and the inability of patients to choose their GP¹⁵⁴ created a reverse effect. In order to get a better quality medical service one had (and still has) to pay 'under the table' (see Balabanova and McKee 2002; Thompson and Witter 2000), because for an 'average' salary many did only an 'average' job. Thus, my interviewees echoed the idea that even if the state regulated their professional norms and requirements, this would not necessarily lead to the provision of better quality services 'behind closed doors'. In fact, many counsellors were adamant about the fact that quality rests upon one's professional conscience, self-regulation and self-discipline rather than on formal regulations:

I mean [in Russia] every person who chooses this profession for whatever reason who but possesses some conscience should just be self-controlled... (VF8)

This emphasis on self-regulation was further tied to the argument that, provided one is a good specialist, one does not need to be 'policed':

For me it [no regulation] is better because I feel freedom... I mean it is easier for me to work when no one polices every step of mine... I mean I'm not specifically against it [harsher state regulation] but it's not like I'm going to die for it... (MF3)

Professions in the Anglo-American context have always fought for as little interference as possible and sought statutory support only when it promised to increase their autonomy even further (Friedson 1988; Macdonald 1995). However, some of the reasons why my interviewees sought professional freedom were slightly different from those in the western context. The above quote exemplifies how some of my interviewees perceived almost any kind of regulation coming from the state as a form of authoritarian control, a form of surveillance. A lack of regulation often was associated with having

¹⁵⁴ One could only use the services of a polyclinic or a hospital which was in the district where one lived.

freedom. Given the history of the Soviet period and the over-regulation and surveillance of almost every sphere of professional life, this is not surprising.¹⁵⁵

There was also a concern about the cost of licensing and the consequent rise of counselling prices, which, as my interviewees pointed out, are already not affordable for many:

[If] this system of licensing is approved it will just add to all these expenses, just imagine! It is very expensive to be in this profession already... Psychological services are already quite expensive in Moscow, and if all this is added then I can't say how much I will have to charge for an hour... (MF9)

An increase in fees is a logical consequence of licensing, since the wages of practitioners increase and while the number of specialists is contained (Kleiner 2001; Macdonald 1995). As I discussed in Chapter 5, many counsellors were concerned by the situation where a lot of people needed counselling but could not afford it. Thus, increasing the level of fees was seen to further limit clients' chances of accessing psychological services. This concern is also articulated in other cultural contexts, for example in the UK (see House 2001).

There was an overall concern as to whether licensing as a form of regulation is applicable to counselling and psychotherapy services. House (2001), for instance, doubts whether the general model of professionalisation is applicable to psychotherapy. The 'special' character of this profession and its uncomfortable relation to licensing was also expressed by some of my interviewees:

You know, it's hard to work out norms and criteria specifically for psychology... Yes, there are no laws, and meanwhile, it's more good than bad, because there's a great deal of approaches and methods – and I'm not sure it could ever be regulated properly... [Also] when something undergoes some regulations, it is the product of the activity that should be licensed. And could you name the material object, a product of psychology? It's not like a loaf of bread... (VF2)

This quote exemplifies at least two concerns about licensing. First, it resonates with the 'western' argument that licensing restricts innovation in the profession (Davies, J. 2009; Hogan, D. 1979). Second, this interviewee saw psychological services and their outcomes as being very different from other products and services and, therefore thought that they

¹⁵⁵ As I discussed in Chapter 4, the autonomy of professional and personal decisions was also a reason why many counsellors sought to work in the private sphere rather than in state organizations.

requiring some special kind of regulation. However, as another interviewee put it, what in fact makes it difficult to regulate counselling is that there is no distinct description of the content of this professional activity in Russia, therefore it is not clear what is to be regulated:

Until there is a law – there is nothing to license... until we determine the basic notions we don't know what to do and how to do it... Who is a psychologist, a counsellor and what he is supposed to do, what kind of diploma he is supposed to have and so on. All these things presuppose some legal norms and there are none. (MF15)

As I pointed out in Chapter 1, the titles psychologist, psychotherapist, and clinical psychologist are to some extent different. However, there may be no factual difference between the professional activities that these professionals perform. For instance if a psychologist undergoes a training course in cognitive psychotherapy and receives a certificate, s/he can practice it. There are stricter regulations for those who work in medical institutions (e.g. clinical psychologists) but even then, what actually happens and how people actually work is often different from what is stated in the job description.¹⁵⁶ Drafts of a law on psychotherapy were proposed by the Russian Professional Psychotherapeutic League (PPL) and by the Russian Psychotherapeutic Association (RPA) in 2000. They were discussed in the professional press (Katkov 2001; Makarov et al. 2000). However, the discussions waned and as I am writing this chapter at the end of 2009 there still has been no progress on ratifying this law.

The problem of legislating mental health practice is not unique to Russia; even in countries where psychology is highly professionalised (e.g. America, Canada), the problem of outlining the areas of competence of specialists still exists (Hall and Hurley 2003; Lewis and Bor 1998). The interesting specificity of the Russian context is that the definitions of the professional activities of mental health specialists and the laws regulating them were mainly expected to be developed and authorised by the state (since many said that there is a need for a law or legal regulation, and the 'law' in Russia can only come from the government). This may be due to the lack of active involvement of the professional community and professional organizations in the process of professionalisation (which I discuss later in this chapter), or due to the history of professional regulation which used to

¹⁵⁶ From my personal experience of working in a psychiatric ward, I know that clinical psychologists engage in therapy and do not only limit their activity to performing tests (as their job guidelines require). One reason for this is that often there are not enough qualified staff and those who are technically required to do therapy (psychiatrists or psychotherapists) have a massive workload and have no time to see all the patients who require psychotherapeutic intervention.

come ‘from above’ for many years. The interesting thing, however, is that waiting for regulation from the state coexisted with very apprehensive attitudes towards the state as a source of regulation. So another issue with licensing that the counsellors were alert to was the appointment of licensing bodies and the process of licensing.

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, the suspicion about state interference in professional matters is closely related to the Soviet history of over-regulation of every aspect of professional life. As scholars (Ashwin 2003; Field 2001) argue there was much bureaucracy and a wide gap between the written law and reality. Consequently, the majority of my interviewees had a genuine mistrust of the state’s ability to actually do the profession any good:

If the state will try to ‘help’ us in this sense [licensing/regulations], I doubt that it will produce something decent... It will probably come up with something absurd and awful so I think in this sense it is better not to let them come even close because they don’t understand anything anyway and everything they do turns out to be for the worst... (MF12)

[I]t is good that our government doesn’t stick its nose into the work of practitioners, this way they can’t spoil anything. They can’t manage to produce useful rules, you know. As far as I know from my colleagues’ experience in children’s rehabilitation centres and other state institutions - there are a lot of unnecessary routine tasks and red tape there. There are often inspections there. So why do I need to spend my time on this rubbish when I can do more important things, why do I need to do loads of paperwork if my work is people? (MF4)

These quotes suggest that the counsellors saw the state as incapable of coming up with efficient regulations. They also had doubts about the proper implementation of these regulations. There were concerns that governmental regulations are usually accompanied by an extensive range of bureaucratic procedures and red tape. The problem with the quality of the legislation produced by the state is rooted in the question of who actually develops it. This interviewee, for instance, had very little faith in the state as a source of regulation because of her mistrust of the people who produce the laws:

Here [in Russia] every time the state interferes it is always a disaster! ... There is a great variety of decrees which regulates the work of psychologists in the system of education and medicine – and all of them are absolutely devastating! They are not written by psychologists so

when you read them it's absolutely clear that the people who wrote them know nothing about what they write... So consequently all these state ways of regulating our work led to a complete mess in the sphere of education and clinical psychology. (MF12)

Because regulatory procedures are devised by state-governed ministries, it means that the people in charge of the development of regulations are not necessarily familiar with all the professional nuances. Moreover the professional community does not exercise much influence over those decisions. Heitlinger (1995) states that under the state socialist regime the regulatory professional bodies were more interested in perpetuating the interests of the state than of the profession not least because the people 'at the top' of the power hierarchy had to be loyal to the ideals of the Communist Party above anything else. Moreover, many people in elite power positions were concerned with nothing else but receiving personal benefits (Klugman 1986). Now that the Communist Party does not exist anymore, corruption is still omnipresent and most people see high officials as pursuing only self-interests (Gudkov 2009).

Besides having doubts about the state's ability to produce adequate legislation and the competence of the legislators themselves, the counsellors also worried about the actual procedure of licensing and who was going to be in control. One concern was that licensing was going to end up in the hands of medical professionals:

Well, 90 percent of psychiatrists... they simply despise them [psychologists]... I've experienced such attitudes myself... It is this professional arrogance... So when licensing takes place the question is going to be raised whom to give and to whom not to give a licence... I am just afraid that good specialists will be forced to take some sorts of exams or will have to prove something to psychiatrists because I'm assuming psychiatrists will be involved in this process since they have licences. So such specialists with ages of experience will have to take some stupid examinations and will have to learn something which has nothing to do with their job... I think none of the psychologists will opt for this examination – at least willingly - and if they do they are going to feel very uncomfortable... (MM1)

This quote illustrates several issues. First of all, it raises the point about of the on-going rivalry within the mental health professions. The inter-professional battle for jurisdiction over knowledge and, consequently, power, is of course not unique to the Russian context

(see Abbott 1988; Adams 2004; Richardson, A. 1987; Lunt 1999; Sandall 1996). It is well-documented, for instance, how medicine in the west tried to keep non-traditional medicine and other professions allied to medicine marginalised or subordinate (Friedson 1988; Sacks 2003). Thus, the question of whether licensing is sought by the occupation itself or by an ‘antagonistic group’ is crucial for professional development (Hogan, D. 1979: 243). As was clear from my interviewees’ accounts, similar tensions exist between psychologists and psychiatrists/psychotherapists in Russia. However, since the regulation of educational standards and the recognition of professional titles in Russia is still authorised by the state¹⁵⁷ doctors do not have decisive power over the professions allied to medicine. So at first glance there should be no reason to worry. At a closer look, however, these concerns are not unfounded. In the Anglo-American context the process of licensing is usually the following:

The state usually creates a nongovernmental licensing board with political appointees, public members and members of the occupation to oversee the regulated occupations. Generally, members of the occupation dominate the licensing boards. The agency must usually be self-supporting by collecting fees and registration charges from persons in the licensed occupations. Usually, members of the occupation provide technical support to the licensing agency. (Kleiner 2000: 191)

Thus, licensing is not supposed to be a direct interference from the state, but rather an acquisition of privileges (from the state) under the supervision of the profession (Evetts 2002). In Russia the anxiety of licensing being controlled by a rival professional group illustrates that many psychologists do not expect it to be exercised according to the above Anglophone model. The counsellors, as I have mentioned before, seem to expect licensing to be exclusively regulated by the state. The concern that the professional psychological community may not have control over licensing is therefore not unfounded: even though medicine does not have direct control over psychology, if licensing is the state’s initiative it is quite possible that medical specialists will be appointed to assess psychologists. The reason for this is that doctors have traditionally occupied power positions in the Ministry of Health in the Soviet Union and psychiatrists for instance had previously lobbied for a distinction between their and psychologists’ activities (Etkind 1997). Moreover, psychological counselling is a young profession that has not yet formed a strong enough subject-specific elite and, therefore, medical specialists may be considered more credible

¹⁵⁷ See the European Education Directory <<http://www.euroeducation.net/prof/russco.htm>>. Accessed 20 July 2009.

by the state licensing body because medicine is a well-established profession. For instance, the head of the League of Psychotherapy *and* Psychology is a psychotherapist (medical doctor by education), not a psychologist.

Finally, the argument against state regulations and licensing articulated by my interviewees was one that always arises in regards to regulation in Russia. The counsellors were concerned whether the licensing was going to be a fair process and whether the legislation would actually work in the way it should:

I am afraid that with our government it is going to be the way it has always been – anybody can give money and get a certificate! It is going to be the same way as in other spheres... (MF5)

I think it's a complete waste of time then! Those who need this licence, would pay for it and buy it without any problems... Everything is done like that here in this country... If everything had been properly organised... I mean, this chaos is just engrained in our system... (MF13)

Research on Russia confirms that there is an elaborate culture of bribes and corruption and a general history of disregarding the law in Russia (Klugman 1986; Ledeneva 1998; Levin and Satarov 2000; Safavian et al. 2001; Ordzhonikidze 2008). Thus, it is not surprising that there was little faith among my interviewees in the fairness of a regulatory process and its implementation. This mistrust (and almost the expectation of the procedures being corrupt) exacerbates the general lack of enthusiasm about positive change coming from licensing.

Given the perceived need for some sort of professional regulation and the doubt in the efficiency of the state to produce and implement it, the question is: why does the professional community not take the initiative, use the state regulation of education as a starting point and take further control of the process of professionalisation? In fact, several interviewees said that in order to be successful, licensing should be in the hands of the professional community and organizations:

Maybe a professional organization [should be established] that would replace that state licensing. So that the membership of this organization guaranteed some things – quality of services and so on. So that this society was a symbol of quality. That could be great. (MF1)

I am completely sure that this interference should not come from the state, but from some professional organization which is interested in establishing some decent, normal regulations. (MF12)

As I have mentioned people may be accustomed to the fact that any regulation comes from ‘above’ and may have little experience of using professional organizations as a force for change. In the next section, in order to understand the functioning of the professional organizations in psychology I examine their relation to the cultural, political and economic context of Russia.

Professional Organizations

Professional organizations are considered to be the main driving force of professionalism in the Anglo-American context. For instance, Greenwood et al. (2002: 62) argue that professional associations are important for several reasons: they are the sites of communication and interaction within the profession (e.g. defining who can be a member, reconciling the competing interests of different communities within the profession); they act as ‘professional representatives’ in relation to other professional fields; and they play an important role in monitoring ‘prevailing institutional norms’. While there are cases when certain occupations undergo professionalisation mainly due to governmental initiatives (see Curnow and McGonigle 2006), it is usually through the working of associations and organizations that a profession achieves recognition, status and autonomy (Barker 1998; Lunt 1999; Moore 1970; Richardson, A. 1987).

In contrast, under the Soviet regime the majority of the professions were regulated by the state, as were their professional organizations (Krause 1991). In fact, in the Soviet era a strong professional movement was seen as a potential political threat. For example, in the case of medicine, the presence of a strong professional movement before 1917 led to a more devastating de-professionalisation and control of medicine, because organised professional forces were regarded as dangerous to the regime and ideology and the state sought to fully suppress them (Field 1991). In the same vein, trade unions did not represent the interests of workers either; rather, they were tightly linked to the Party and exercising its will (Ashwin and Clarke 2002). Ordinary workers usually had very little chance to use them in any way in order to protect their interests (Ashwin 2003). Today in Russia there is a freedom of association. However, one still does not see the thriving power of professional organizations in counselling. This, as I would argue, is partly due to the Soviet legacy and the nature of existing state regulation of the counselling.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ The issue of the under-development of professional associations also relates to the general problem of under-development of civil society in Russia. There is evidence that civil society is emerging in Russia, and researchers point out its contextual differences from the ‘western’ equivalent. However, the formation of civil organizations of all types is still rather slow (see Hudson 2003; Evans et al. 2006).

There are several professional psychological associations at national level in Russia. The Russian Psychological Society¹⁵⁹ (RPS) and the Russian Professional Psychotherapeutic League¹⁶⁰ (PPL) are the two main umbrella organizations that offer membership to psychologists. The RPS, which is supposed to be the main organization for psychological counsellors, was established in 1994 and according to their website has 50 regional branches. However, there is no information whatsoever on membership or how to obtain one. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, information on regional branches (the Far-Eastern branch in particular) was at least seven years out of date (when I checked in 2008) and was still not updated when I checked again in spring 2010. There is also no membership statistics of the RPS available¹⁶¹ (I sent an e-mail about this to the RPS on the 15th July 2009 and 10th of November 2009 but received no reply). The website provides a lengthy explanation of the functions of the executive bodies and the purposes of the organization but contains no information on the Society's actual activities.

The PPL was formed in 1998 and compared to the RPS is a more active body with a wider range of goals. The League mediates the application process for European psychotherapy certification, maintains close links with research institutes, has its own journals and space for publications, and holds various conferences and events. There are, however, several problematic areas in the relationship between the PPL and psychological counsellors. As one of my interviewees pointed out, finding out about membership and the certification of counsellors was quite difficult (at least in 2003, when she wanted to do it):

I wanted to become a member of the PPL. I still can't do it by the way because it's hard to find enough information about it. I don't have the necessary acquaintances there, and my inquiries via the internet are mostly left unanswered. (MF15)

This quote illustrates that there is very little publicity accessible on the activity of this organization and many specialists in the area do not know how it functions and what it does. The PPL mainly focuses on psychotherapy and psychotherapeutic certification. The aims of the League are to assist the development of the psychotherapeutic community and the protection of the legal interests of psychotherapists.¹⁶² The statute of the League also specifies that the members of the League are *mainly* professional psychotherapists. Even

¹⁵⁹ Further details can be found on the official website of the RPS, www.rpo.rse.ru.

¹⁶⁰ Further details can be found on the official website PPL, www.oppl.ru.

¹⁶¹ It is estimated in Balachova et al. (2004) to be about 5000-6000 people; however, the authors do not specify the source, do not specify whether this is the membership in Moscow or across Russia and do not specify when exactly the membership stood at that figure.

¹⁶² See organisational statute for more detail at <http://www.oppl.ru/ustav-ligi.html>.

though psychologists can get PPL membership, they seem to be slightly marginalised because there is no clarity in their relation to psychotherapy (see Chapter 1).

The participation in professional organizations in my sample was very low. Nobody in my sample belonged to the RPS. Two of my interviewees (in Moscow) were members of the PPL, four more were thinking or had plans of joining it. None of my interviewees in Vladivostok belonged to any of the aforementioned professional associations. Some of my interviewees were members of the smaller-scale subject-specific organizations (which I discuss later in this chapter). Two interviewees used to run an Association of Psychologists and Psychotherapists in Vladivostok, but at the time of conducting the interviews (2008) the organization had ceased its existence. So why was there so little interest in organising?

Organisational Membership and Expectations

When asked why they did not belong to any professional organizations my interviewees named several reasons. One was a general distrust and disregard of organizations rooted in the socialist past. As Salmenniemi (2008: 31) argues, the public organizations under the Soviet regime were supposed to represent ‘the people’, and not focus on the individual interests of their members. This usually meant that they were representing the interests of the Party (but since the Party interests were supposed to be the same as those of every individual this, allegedly, was not an issue). As Ashwin (2003) argues, workers in the Soviet Union were usually discontent with organizations and higher management, because although the workers were supposedly legally protected (by the Labour Code¹⁶³) in reality there was a lot of power abuse by managers and union authorities, which resulted in the proliferation of informal practices such as *blat*, corruption and bribes. Thus, nowadays, there is a great deal of scepticism among people in terms of whether organizations (or any sort of representative bodies) can be trusted to actually fulfil their role of representing people’s interests and contributing to their professional development. Moreover, the legacy of the Soviet period where everything was supposed to be done in and for the collective (and most of it ‘voluntary’, i.e. unpaid) seems to have produced a backlash against organising in general (Hemment 2004; Sundstorm and Henry 2006). ‘Paying dues, participating in endless meetings, and coercive “volunteering” caused permanent scorn and aversion’ towards organising (Remennick 1998). In the same vein in my sample, many people did not want to be in societies and in a way saw ‘organizations’ as a force that would impose the ‘one-size fits all’ approach:

¹⁶³ The Labour Code of the Russian Federation (2001). Available at <<http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/WEBTEXT/60535/65252/E01RUS01.htm>>. Accessed 20 September 2010.

There are no professional associations. But to make everybody walk in rows and pay fees... I think that it is unrealistic in this field...

Absolutely. Because people are this way... it is hard to make them [people working in the field of psychology] follow certain rules and laws... It is impossible to set rigid rules. (VF5)

This rejection of 'set rules' also ties in with the fact that there is a long history of state-produced regulations that were rigid, unhelpful and badly implemented (the issue which I discussed earlier in this chapter).

Despite this Soviet legacy many counsellors recognised the need for an organization. But the issue that many of my interviewees pointed out, was that membership of the RPS or PPL (or other professional organizations) was not a 'trade mark', i.e. the membership did not guarantee anything, either to a psychologist or a client (compared to membership in the American Psychological Association (APA) which most of my interviewees cited as an example of 'good' membership). For one, there are almost no entry requirements in the PPL, as this interviewee described:

So we have the League... But there are no criteria or anything... This organization accepts everybody! There are no limits, no restriction. Everybody is accepted with a university degree in psychology... I have to say that a receptionist there used to forget to even ask for a diploma... So any person might come and claim that he is a psychologist! (MF5)

This of course lowers the credibility of the organisational membership in the eyes of the specialists:

I don't really know why I have to belong to it. Actually there are so many weird people who are its members that now I'm not even sure whether it is a wise decision to mention that you belong to this association... (MM2)

Apart from the lack of entry barriers, the credibility of the membership was also compromised by the lack of quality assurance and/or control of professional ethics on the part of the organizations. An important thing that all aspiring professions (in the western context) do in order to prove their credibility is develop a code of conduct that will rule out malpractice and set standards of professional behaviour (Lunt 1999: 245). The regulation of conduct happens through disciplinary procedures and according to an ethical code to which one subscribes as a member. The organization then fulfils the role of ensuring the

quality of its members' practices through operating various ethical committees (ibid: 244). In Russia there is no tradition of ethics codes in psychology. Most of the existing ethics codes are adopted from western organizations (e.g. the APA) and slightly adapted to the Russian context (sometimes not). There is also no means of control in the organizations over whether members actually adhere to the code of conduct:

There are a lot of people in the RPS and a lot of regional divisions and according to its structure it should work well, but for some reason whatever they do has no real influence on anything. They somehow cannot... I mean there are no mechanisms within this organization which will make even its own members observe the norms it develops...

(MF12)

Thus, even though according to the websites of the psychological organizations they have ethical committees, these seem to exist only on paper.

Finally, besides doubts in the authority and credibility of these organizations and their membership, one critique (voiced both in Moscow and Vladivostok) was that becoming a member does not really bring any tangible outcomes or benefits:

These organizations give very little really... For example the PPL, they offer some training at discounts rates. Or they travel somewhere together and it is easier and cheaper to travel to various conferences with them, but cheaper doesn't mean free of charge and travelling, well, how much travelling can one do? As for any other activities... I don't think they do anything... That's why I don't see any personal benefit of membership.

(MF3)

The counsellors in Vladivostok, where there are no local professional organizations at all and several regional branches of the nation-wide organizations had a rather wretched existence, were even more sceptical:

Well, there are no organizations here... The Moscow-based psychological association tried to lure our local psychologists, but after I became its member and I've been paying membership fees, I got nothing as a result... Absolutely nothing, except some vague bonuses – we hardly ever participated in any training held by them – since all of the workshops are in Moscow or close to that region, so it didn't really make any sense, you know. (VF1)

There exists a so-called system of branches ... but I think their activity is minimal and barely visible, I have never heard of anything that they do... I mean, if they cannot offer a clear structure, formulated purposes, a financial plan, set tasks, then their organization will fail... (VM1)

As is clear from the above quotes the counsellors saw no particular purpose or benefit in belonging to these organizations. In her study of women's organizations, Kay (2000) shows that those people who are not familiar with organizational policies and have no previous experiences of working in or with such organizations, have a false impression of the size of their resources and the extent of their power and influence. People tend to expect much more from an organization than the latter can actually provide. A similar situation emerged in my study. Most of the counsellors were not familiar with the organisational activity, but were expecting a lot from the organizations which was evident from their disappointment in the 'petty' membership bonuses that the organizations provided. So why have professional organizations not increased their influence in the professional community in the last two decades?

The Iron Hand in a Velvet Glove: The Subtle Rule of the State

The main problem, of course, is that these organizations have very little power in terms of professional decisions. For instance, membership in the APA or the British Psychological Society (BPS) is a sign of quality assurance. The reason for this is that both the APA and the BPS exercise a great deal of authority over a variety of professional issues. The main thing they control is the process of identifying the terms and conditions under which an individual can 'belong' to the professional psychological community, who can be called a counsellor. For instance they define the minimum education level; they accredit and approve educational programs; they set the number of years of practice and supervision needed for licensing (Lunt 1999: 243). In the UK, for example, there is no statutory law protecting the title of psychologist, 'but a Chartered Psychologist [recognised and registered by the BPS] status performs a similar function' (ibid.: 243). Strong professional organizations, such as the APA, also provide their members with social, financial and legal support, they advocate for and monitor the interests of the professionals and the profession in other state institutions and so on.¹⁶⁴ Of course, it takes time for a professional organization to develop to the point where it is strong enough to offer all these services. Since the RPS has been around for less than twenty years (in 2009 when I did my

¹⁶⁴ See the APA website for details. www.apa.org/membership/services.html.

interviews) it may be that the situation will change in the near future. However, there are certain specificities of the professional regulation in Russia that, I suggest, cast doubt on the potential success of the development of psychological organizations.

First, there was a problem with control over entry, title and educational standards. The professions in the western context can negotiate their relationship with the state, which enables the professional group to be legally in control of the ‘production of producers’ (Evetts 2002: 345). As Kleiner (2000: 192) writes, ‘state-regulated occupations can use political institutions such as state legislatures or city councils to control initial entry and immigration, and thereby restrict supply’. In the US, educational programs in psychology are accredited by the APA or licensure board (Hall and Hurley 2003: 473). This leads to greater professional autonomy and control. In Russia, the list of state-recognised professions and titles is issued and controlled by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.¹⁶⁵ While in the west professional organizations can have a say over the standards of education, in Russian all the standards and university curricula are developed by the Educational and Methodical Association (EMA)¹⁶⁶ on the classical university education and controlled by the Russian Federation Committee for Higher Education (see Chapter 1). Although these standards may have been developed by psychologists who are members of the EMA, their decisions still do not reflect the views of the whole professional community since the EMA includes only academics while practitioners (e.g. the leaders and members of the professional associations) have little to no influence over educational decisions. To sum up, the control of the professional community over educational standards and entry requirements into the profession are limited and small-scale, and the last word is still that of the state body. Thus, the professional community does not have the means to formally control entry into the profession in terms of standards and quality and therefore the power that is supposed to come from restricting occupational entry lies with the state.

Another site of potential regulation - the relationship between the worker and the employing body - is regulated by the Labour Code that outlines the rights of the employee which, if broken, are to be defended individually in court. Similarly, if one engages in entrepreneurial activity, then one’s actions and the relationship between the state, the

¹⁶⁵ Ministry of Education and Sciences of Russian Federation, Decree №4 (2005) ‘On Establishing a Register of the Specialities of Higher Professional Education,’ 12.01.2005. Available at <http://www.edu.ru/db/mo/Data/d_05/m4.html>. Accessed 16 July 2009.

¹⁶⁶ Educational and Methodical Association (EMA) on the classical university education develops federal state educational standards, review manuscripts of textbooks and teaching aids prepared, monitors methodological innovations etc. The committee that approves psychology standards consists of psychologists. However, the committee is Moscow-based, the Chairman of the EMA Board is a rector of Moscow State University and educational standards developed are based on ‘classic’ university principles, i.e. mainly theoretical and usually does not reflect the needs of practitioners (as I described in Chapter 3). For more details on the EMA, see <http://www.umo.msu.ru/>.

entrepreneur and the client are regulated by the Federal Law on Small Entrepreneurship in the Russian Federation¹⁶⁷. If a psychologist works in an organization, there are also industry-specific job definitions based on relevant state regulations which outline a psychologist's duties in this particular industry and the relationship with the employer. For example, if a psychologist works in a medical institution, his/her activity and duties are regulated by various decrees of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation.¹⁶⁸

Finally, although it seems that the state does not explicitly control a professional psychologist after s/he graduates from university as my interviewees said, I suggest that at a closer look it does. For instance, the titles 'psychologist' and 'clinical psychologist' are officially recognised in the All-Russian Register of Professions, Posts and Wage Grades.¹⁶⁹ This means that the state provides a definition of who can be called a psychologist, and according to the State Educational Standard of Higher Professional Education¹⁷⁰ a psychologist is a person with a 'specialist' (bachelor) degree in psychology. This document also defines the areas of knowledge and aptitude that a psychologist should have upon graduation. Even though this may be a very vague description it has a very powerful impact: it defines the professional title and prevents other parties (e.g. professional organizations) from redefining it. For instance, even if a professional organisation decides to raise the recommended education standard to a PhD in order for a person to receive an organisational permission for private practice, someone who has a Specialist degree will still be entitled to practise because it says so in the state description of the title. Of course, the organization may be extremely powerful and its membership a necessity for professional practice (e.g. the APA). However, as I have discussed above, in Russia this is not the case and as I discuss further in this chapter organizations do not seem to be attempting to gain this credibility.

Thus, keeping all the above in mind, it seems that there is very little left for professional associations to do. This is clearly reflected in the official documents of the RPS. For instance, the main aims and goals of the RPS, outlined on the website are the following:

- To assist the development of theory, practice and education in psychology;

¹⁶⁷ Federal Law on Small Entrepreneurship in the Russian Federation. Available at <http://www.statys.org/zakon_mal_pr.html>. Accessed 16 June 2009.

¹⁶⁸ A full list of normative regulations for psychologists working in various industries is available at: <http://www.psy.msu.ru/science/public/psy_prof/lows.html> and <<http://www.psyinst.ru/page.php?p=14>>. Accessed 16 June 2009.

¹⁶⁹ The All-Russian Register of Professions, Posts and Wage Grades. GosStandart of Russia, 26 December 1994 №367, with amendments №№ 1/96, 2/99, 3/2002, 4/2003. Available at <http://www.gmcgks.ru/new_page_84.htm>. Accessed 16 June 2009.

¹⁷⁰ See footnote 49.

- to bring in scholars and specialists to solve current scientific and practical issues in the interests of society;
- to assist professional consolidation for a better realisation of the creative potential of professional psychologists in Russia;
- to assist in providing the protection of professional and social rights and interests of psychologists;
- to assist the cultural development of Russia.¹⁷¹

As is clear from the above statements, the main purpose of the organization according to its aims is ‘*to assist*’. For instance, there is an Expert Committee of members of the organization, which, according to the statute, can ‘*assist*’ in the development of professional and education standards, and ‘*put forward proposals*’ for the development of voluntary professional certification and other professional issues. This phrasing implies that there is someone else who makes a final decision on these matters (i.e. various state bodies). Thus, from reading the statutory document of the RPO one gets a sense that this association does not have any authority or power to determine any professional issues.

As Salmenniemi (2008) demonstrates, professional and other civic organizations often do not have any connection or stake in the state or political domain because they deliberately declare themselves to be separate from any kind of politics. This may partially be aimed at gaining credibility since, as I mentioned, there is a general mistrust of any collaboration with politics and state authorities in Russia (see e.g. Kay 2000; Shkapentokh 2006). In the Russian mind, ‘civic organizations serve society, the people and a “common good”, while politics are associated with parties and the aspiration to and struggle for power’: a ‘dirty business in which decent people should not take part’ (Salmenniemi 2008: 52). However, the fact that professional organizations are divorced from political activity means that they deny themselves access to any sort of political power or leverage. Moreover, as Salmenniemi (2008: 193) shows, state authorities do not expect civic organizations to challenge governmental policies; rather, they expect these institutions to be ‘helpers’ of the state.

The vicious circle is therefore complete; if membership participation increases and the organization gains credibility, it could claim more authority over professional issues. But at the moment the organizations are restrained in their activities and therefore unable to carry out any significant actions which, as I have discussed, puts off potential members. This in turn prevents the organizations from further development.

¹⁷¹ For more details see the organisational statute available at <<http://rpo.sfedu.ru/ustav.shtml>>. Accessed 20 July 2009.

Small Organizations and Large Consequences

There are however, quite a few smaller organizations - the unions of specialists practising a particular kind of therapy - that seem to be more popular among specialists. Nine out of 17 of my interviewees in Moscow belonged to subject-specific organizations (e.g. The Association of Family Psychologists, the Association of Body-Oriented Psychotherapists, the Society of Client-Centred Psychotherapists etc.). None of my interviewees in Vladivostok belonged to any because, as I mentioned, there were no organizations there at the time of my interviews. Even though such societies were more popular than big organizations there were still various problems with this form of organising.

Therapy-specific societies and associations are independent entities and do not report to and/or are not connected in any way with the bigger professional organizations such as the RPS or the PPL. This 'independence', however, has its drawbacks. For instance the APA is an umbrella association and has various divisions or societies of specific interests (for instance Division 17 is the Society of Counselling Psychology¹⁷²) with its own membership requirements and benefits. However, since they are part of a wider association they have a right to vote or express opinions on wider professional matters. In Russia smaller therapy-specific organizations do not have actual representative power in decision-making about wider professional matters. Equally, on their own they are not powerful enough to lobby about anything regarding their own therapy methods. So if these societies are stripped of any formal power why are they being formed and are more popular with practitioners than bigger associations? I suggest, based on my data, that they are mainly created out of and for the fulfilment of particular personal interests or the interest of a small group of psychologists.

Usually therapy-specific organizations are created by a small number of people who may be, as this interviewee elaborates, graduates of the same programme:

I was one of the founders of the Society of Client-Centred Psychotherapists. When we finished that Austrian education program, I and some other colleagues, we decided that we have to create this organization, so we registered it and it is an official organization. We have supervision groups there, we have a board of trainers. This gives a feeling of support and a feeling of belonging to some community. (MF7)

The goal of this organization seemed to be that of creating a community. Sundstorm and Henry (2006) found that many civic organizations in Russia are similarly based on

¹⁷² See the APA website for more information www.apa.org/about/division.html.

informal ties. The question is whether and to what extent these organizations are open to external membership, and whether they do anything to promote and establish their specific therapy, rather than just satisfying the personal needs of a tight circle of friends.

There are various ways of using organizations for specific (often very personal) purposes. For instance, the quote below shows how membership in an international organization and the creation of a local organization was used to secure a place in the market of training provision. If a particular therapeutic approach is new in the market, establishing an organization offered an opportunity to carry out training programmes and workshops in this field and to control the issue of certificates, which effectively means earning money. The following interviewee indicated that he wanted to obtain membership in an international organization since he needed credibility as a trainer:

MM2: [I would like to become a member of the] International Organization of Family Constellation Therapists. It is an international organization and its membership is a means of telling people that you are a good specialist. I need it...

MK: Why? And why an international organization?

MM2: Well, there is no Russian equivalent yet. And actually we are thinking [of establishing one] ... You see, there is a carve-up of this new field going on at the moment... And here you need to show that you are good. And if I am going to teach these methods I need to have all the possible insignias and signs of recognition...

This interviewee and his colleague were among the first in Moscow to pass the family constellation certification and to establish a private training facility with the right to issue certificates (personal communication). Thus, in order to secure this niche, there was a need for him to get recognition in the professional community and, as is clear from the quote, membership in this international organisation did the trick. Furthermore as he mentioned, the next step would be establishing an organisation for this particular therapy. While one cannot get a legal monopoly for providing a particular kind of therapy training, gaining prestige as a specialist through credentials and establishing an organization is a legitimate way to secure a stable flow of clients and therefore money. This echoes research on NGOs in Russia which shows that often there is very little participation in these organizations and they revolve around a particular person's interests (Salmenniemi 2008).

Even though, in the long run, the foundation of all these small organisations can be beneficial for the development of the profession, the fact that people are using

organizations for their own interests and not explicitly for the interests of the professional community exacerbates the general mistrust of organizations:

I don't even know how to put it but I think that when this organization [the RPS] was founded it wasn't its aim to promote psychology or raise some psychological standards... I think there were some other goals... (MF14)

They [organizations] are founded for some social get-together, not for real accomplishments... not for standing up for one's rights and so on... so it is more for socialising and when something real starts happening, everybody has this feeling that those new people, new members might be their competitors, and that it is better to stay away and not develop this organization... (MF6)

Thus, it emerged from my interviews that there was very little incentive to participate in organizations due to the fact that most of them are weak and due to the general distrust of organisations' capacities. The paradox was that although the counsellors generally expressed a desire for strong organisations, the majority did not want to participate in those that exist in order to make them stronger. Although there are some organizations, most seem to pursue small-scale personal goals. Another impasse was that in the absence of organizations that would fulfil their needs (or in the absence of any organisations at all, like in Vladivostok) the majority of my interviewees did not express any desire to establish new ones or change the existing ones. My interview data, as I shall now discuss, showed that there were particular reasons for such apathy for action.

The Difficulties of Organizing

In Vladivostok, even though the first psychologists graduated about 17 years ago, there were no professional organizations at the time of my interviews (summer 2008). The regional branches of the RPS existed only on paper. But although the majority of my interviewees in Vladivostok expressed a desire for such an association, very few were willing to actually put an effort into organising it. There were at least three main comments as to why counsellors had such an apathetic attitude towards organising, with all three being closely intertwined.

First, there is very little support and very poor funding available for *pro bono* and non-profit organizations of any type in Russia (Salmenniemi 2008). Thus generally non-

profit organizations are responsible for their own finances, which is also the case for professional establishments. For example, the RPS statute¹⁷³ declares that the finances of the Society depend on voluntary donations, membership fees, earnings from events organised by the Society, income from business activity, publishing and other incomes allowed by the law. This represents a problem, especially for smaller associations. For instance, this is how one of my interviewees from Moscow described the process of running the Association of Body-Oriented Therapists:

[I]t is one of the few organizations that lives... well, I'd rather say it survives... For example the Association has its own journal... There is no money to publish it, so what do we do? We collect our own money, publish the issue, sell it and then get our money back, then we collect money again and so on... So I do make both ends meet and we don't take just anybody to be its members... But we have real problems with that [with organizations]. (MF14)

A similar story came from a Vladivostok interviewee who was the founder of the only ever professional association of psychologists in Vladivostok (which no longer exists):

And then gradually all renting benefits enjoyed by non-commercial social organizations ceased to exist. And our Government began to sort of legally hound such organizations from all premises... our government didn't support us and had not the slightest interest in it... I had the intention to apply for some grants, but there're no programs providing grants for counselling... they are given to those who deal with sociology and social psychology mostly but not with practical counselling. So this burden was laid upon the shoulders of the founders only. (VF2)

Commonly, many positions in organizations such as the APA are voluntary and unpaid. In Russia the majority of civic organizations also tend to rely on volunteer labour and are not able to pay their members (Salmennimi 2008: 36).¹⁷⁴ This represents a problem since as I showed in Chapter 4, it is difficult to make a living and the counsellors already work extremely long hours in multiple jobs. Therefore, as an interviewee in Vladivostok said, she simply had no time to do any extra (unpaid) work:

¹⁷³ Available at <<http://rpo.sfedu.ru/ustav.shtml#6>>. Accessed 20 October 2009.

¹⁷⁴ From the RPS website it was not clear how much (if at all) people in executive positions are paid.

I'm not sure, but probably the lack of this organizational commitment can be explained by the rhythm of our lives – you know I can judge looking at myself and my colleagues' experience. Not only do most of us work in the university and do private practice, but many people also conduct seminars, training and group psychotherapy, and so on. People do a lot of work... (VF4)

I mean I've worked in an organization and I've been through all these organizational matters. It only takes up time. So now I'm not interested in that anymore. I'm more interested to focus on individual affairs. (MF3)

[T]hose who try to work in this sphere [in counselling], they are just too busy to engage in any sort of 'social activities'. I feel like we are desperately in need of establishing some kind of organization, some association of therapists, which would be empowered to regulate professional and social matters, to give references, but I know how much time it would take to launch this process... So I'm out... (VF1)

Thus, there is a vicious circle: organizations are unpaid and people have no interest in voluntary work because they are too busy earning money. Unless running an organization brought immediate individual benefits (as in the cases I described earlier), many of my interviewees did not want to engage with it. However the situation of irregular employment and low pay is partially due to the lack of strong professional organizations. Finally, as Moore (1970: 158) writes, 'professional associations are likely to be instigated by small groups of active practitioners' but as was evident in my sample, the unwilling of the majority to participate in or show any kind of support to existing organizations was disheartening to those who actually tried to do something:

It's also that now I'm tired of all these social duties which are basically not paid in any way. Of course it was necessary at the particular stages of development, and I had a motivation to support this professional organization. And now [that some goals are achieved] I'm not interested in doing these things anymore. Because everyone should express initiative you know – if it's just me – then what's the point?... (VF2)

Fighting alone left people disillusioned about the possibility of change and produced further apathy:

I don't know – recently I just have this 'who cares' attitude... I think it's just due to my age, you know... Some 15 years ago I was fighting, organising and struggling and saying – 'Oh that's not what psychology should be like!'... But now it's just... I don't want to spit into the wind [laughs]. And another thing is, what for? I would but the wind changes all the time [laughs]. (MF14)

These sentiments expressed by the above-quoted interviewee resonate with the general lack of belief in social change in Russia (Gorshkov 2008).

Thus, the picture that emerged from my interviews was rather depressing: people were expecting organizations to be efficient (i.e. provide tangible benefits) and, preferably, established and run by someone else. At the same time, it seemed to be difficult for the organizations to work efficiently because the organizations did not have the support of the community and had little legal power to regulate significant professional issues. However, it could be argued that if an organization does not have legal opportunities to boost its influence, it could be possible to increase its authority and status by being a trade mark of quality. For instance, through making its membership exclusive based on high credentials, an organization can become a source of guarantee of professional excellence and therefore membership in it becomes a tangible benefit (such as for instance in the APA). However, very few psychological associations in Russia seemed to be set up with this paradigm in mind.

Of course, it would be unfair to say that all organizations existed only for the individual benefit of their members. There were at least two interviewees who were members/organizers of associations which have a good reputation and indeed help to promote a particular therapy and maintain its standards. Unfortunately, such organizations were few. As I described, the more common case (both in large and smaller organizations) was that they based their membership criteria on social qualities (e.g. belonging to particular networks, knowing the 'right' people etc.) or, in fact, on nothing at all (e.g. anyone could become a member regardless of the level of professionalism). So the question is, why did so few organizations make the credentials and quality of their members the cornerstone of their existence? Why don't they seek to become a pinnacle of quality in their field, thereby gaining high status and power? Why do organizations keep reproducing the 'social network model' of recruitment rather than trying to increase entry criteria (which are the insurance of professionalism)?

The answers to these questions raised above are complex and multifaceted and probably a matter of further investigation beyond this thesis. The reasons for such

situations that emerged from my study lay both in economic and social contexts. First of all, it is not very surprising that organizations reproduce the principle of networking in the recruitment of their members because, as I mentioned before, networks play a very important role in Russia. Second, some organizations (even the bigger ones) really struggle with funding so instead of prioritising a long-term goal of setting a standard of quality, they try to pursue an immediate goal of survival. Thirdly, it seems that establishing and running an organization is quite difficult and therefore the organizers try to extract as much benefit from it as possible. As a result they are less worried about the standards of their membership, because promoting excellence is not their goal in the first place. Finally, as I have mentioned before, the professionals may have little experience in realising the potential of organisational power, since for a long time in the Soviet Union the only organization with real power was the Communist party. In any case, as I have illustrated, the premises on which the organizations are formed in Russia at the moment are clearly not benefiting their development and the development of the profession in general.

Do We Even Need Professionalisation?

So given the desire for regulation and professionalisation and at the same time the lack of willingness to ‘fight’ for it through organising, how did the counsellors see this situation and what did they propose? One recurring point of view was that the lack of regulation and the lack of organizations is good because it allows professionals to develop a sense of responsibility themselves:

I think that at the moment it helps to develop the feeling of inner responsibility... And a client must share the responsibility, and the therapist, in his turn, must foresee and warn and inform a client of possible consequences – but all those things I talk through when concluding a contract with a new client and we put them down... (VF1)

Another view was that no licensing and regulation (and consequently no help, security, or stability) means that the development of the profession is like a process of natural selection: the strongest survives and this was not seen as necessarily a bad thing:

In any case life is always about survival, it is natural selection so to speak. A psychologist who can't work simply stops working. And there is no need to give him a licence to work as there is no need not to give him a licence to prevent him from working in this area and so on. He will

stop doing this because he will feel unsuccessful, or he may get subjected to professional burn out or get psychologically unwell - it also happens.
(MM1)

Some counsellors (especially in Vladivostok) did not have any illusions or hopes of positive change in the domain of regulation or organising and therefore the majority said that the only way to be at the moment was to adjust:

MK: Would you like to change anything in order to make the working process easier for you?

VF2: We practically do everything ourselves... Absolutely everything! And we really got used to it... From renting an office to qualification improvement courses, so I personally don't have any illusions, I don't have hopes or questions on this topic [laughs]. If anybody wants to help, please do! [laughs]. Moreover, we would encourage it. If it doesn't happen – well we won't ask really... I just think it's useless to discuss any sources of help except yourself...

Ashwin (1998; 1999) explores the question of why Russian workers are generally very patient, and why there have been virtually no large movements of workers' organizations before and after 1989. She argues that such 'patience' is due to a combination of two factors: workers are 'atomised' since they are pursuing individual survival strategies and at the same time there is something that she calls 'alienated collectivism', i.e. workers usually expect their managers or representatives to negotiate with the 'outside world' and if they are not content they change the representative and hope for the better (Ashwin 1998: 195-196). This very much echoes the situation in psychology. There was little by way of a collective strategy of pursuing professional/working interests. As Lunt (1999) highlights, professional associations play a key role in maintaining legal and quality guidelines, protecting the interests of the profession, and contributing to the professionalisation of psychology. However, as was clear from my interviews, at present counsellors are trying to defend their interests individually (which as I pointed out in Chapter 4, is not always successful). But as one of my interviewees said, maybe the time will come for collective action:

Now I guess it's time to live through some divergence... When we had a goal, when we tried to form this market of psychological services in Vladivostok, we worked together side by side, but now everyone probably needs to take his own path... But I expect some qualitative

changes in the specialists' qualifications and understanding [of professionalisation] to occur, and finally we'll all realize that it is important to stand by each other. (VF 2)

Thus, some hoped that with time the situation regarding their professionalisation would get better and in fact many said that psychology had a good future.

Gender and Professionalisation 'Alternatives'

As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, when talking about professionalisation and regulations there were not many gender differences in my interviewees' accounts. The views of male and female counsellors were very similar. However, does this mean that there is indeed no difference in the position of men and women on the process of professionalisation? In this section I discuss women's participation in professional organizations and the position of women in the development of the 'professional project' of counselling in Russia.

Organising Women and Women's Organizations

There is a body of literature on women's activism in Russia and women's civic and political organizations (Kay 2000; Konstantinova 1994; Racioppi and See 1995; Spirling 1999; Sulaenniemi 2008). However, all of these studies focus on civic organizations and NGOs. Little is known about women's professional associations in Russia. The reason for this is that there are none. Equally, there is virtually no research on women's participation in professional organizations. My data does not allow me to make broad gender comparisons but only to depict certain trends. The three men in my sample had similar attitudes and views on the issue of professional organizations as my female interviewees. However, the head of the RPS and the PPL are both men. Out of 50 regional branches of the RPS 18 are headed by women, 32 by men. This resonates with research on women's scarce representation in organizations, politics and power positions in the Soviet Union and Russia (Kay 2000; Posadskaya 1994a; Racioppi and See 1995) and highlights vertical gender stratification even in female-dominated professions. According to Hesli et al. (2001) a high percentage of women in Russia believe that positions of (political) power should be occupied by men rather than by women. In pre-revolutionary Russia any kind of politics was seen as an exclusively male domain (Shirayev 1999). In the Soviet era despite equality propaganda women were present mostly in the lower level of power structures

(Lapidus 1975). In contemporary Russia men dominate the top positions across all structures of authority (Kanap'anova 2008). As Gorsuch (1996) demonstrates, in Soviet society women were socially and structurally discouraged from participating in organization activities (e.g. they had more duties at home and did not have time for meetings, moreover politics was not considered a 'feminine' thing to do). These conditions can still prevent women's participation in organizations. Occasionally some of my female interviewees mentioned that men are probably better suited for organizations, since they are more competent and organised:

There are some institutions like professional associations or something like this and there are many men there in high status positions. It's just I think men somehow tend to structure everything more and better, to build up some organizations... (MF2)

Such essentialist discourses are rooted in the Soviet gender ideology and widely documented by other researchers (Kay 2000; Salmenniemi 2008). There were, only a few responses that highlighted the structural problems of representation rather than blaming everything on individual choice:

Traditionally men have a priority if they work in structures. Men's path in general is vertical and women's is horizontal... And a man is trying to get into leadership positions... For a woman there is such a thing as a glass ceiling... (MF4)

Some of my interviewees reported experiencing direct discrimination in their attempt to climb professional and managerial ladders, which put them off trying to pursue this route further:

Then I applied for the job of an associate professor... There were three candidates: two men and I. I had worked there 10 years... But they [the Board] refused to sign my documents. They hired a man. You see, they just don't need a 'baba'^[175]... Yes, they just wouldn't sign my promotion because I'm a woman. The same situation happens with electing heads of the department, or organizations... men are preferred. Out of all the contenders they select a man. I don't know for sure – I never applied. I didn't have this experience and I'm not going to have it. I'm not going

¹⁷⁵ Rude slang word for a woman, something like a peasant woman.

through these things anymore, no... I don't want to hit this wall every time. (MF15)

This story may be an extreme case because this interviewee worked as a lecturer and as a counsellor in a military academy. Thus it may be the case that discrimination is not as severe in civic institutions. However, the general attitude that a man is a better leader because women are emotional and should not embark on managerial duties still seems to prevail in Russia and even among highly educated people (Hesli et al. 2001; Kanap'ianova 2008).

Interestingly enough, research shows that NGOs and civic organizations are feminised and are often run by women (Jonson 2006; Salmenniemi 2008). Why not professional organizations then? I suggest that there are at least two possible reasons. First, as Salmenniemi (2008) shows, working for NGOs provide an income and it is usually a full-time job. Professional organizations differ in this sense as being on the board of a professional organization is an activity complimentary to whatever other workload women have; moreover, they are differently (and usually poorly) funded. Therefore, because it can be more difficult for women to earn a living in this profession (see Chapter 4), fewer of them want or can afford to spend time on organisational activities. Second, at a first glance, women's reluctance to participate in professional psychological organizations in a way contradicts the popular discourses of women being more active members of society due to the 'crisis of masculinity' and men being too lazy to participate in 'social life' (see Kiblitckaya 2000a; Salmenniemi 2008). However, I would speculate that while civic activism is not necessarily related to any particular professional activity, being in a high position in a professional organization brings benefits and status for one as a professional and may therefore be more attractive to a man. Therefore, the lower representation of women in power position in professional organizations may be an indication of the fact that women are active, but in those spheres in which they are 'allowed' to be active.

'Alternative' Strategies of Professional Closure

Witz (1990) writes that professionalisation is effectively a process of occupational closure and that the role of gender in this process has been overlooked. In her study of medicine and nursing in Britain, she introduced the concept of a 'professional project', which she defines as 'labour market strategies which aim for an occupational monopoly over the provision of certain skills and competencies in a market for services. They consist of strategic courses of action which take the form of occupational closure strategies and

which employ distinctive tactical means in pursuit of the strategic aim or goal of closure' (Witz 1990: 675). She also argues that the strategies of occupational closure are gendered, are embedded in their context and influenced by the ideology of patriarchal society, which can disadvantage female professional projects. Further research also shows that 'prevailing gender ideologies were an important element of both the exclusionary strategies employed by male groups and in countervailing usurpatory strategies used by female groups' (Adams and Bourgeault 2004: 74; Barker 1998; Sandall 1996). As Glazer (1991) argues in the case of nursing, in their struggle to promote professionalism and raise the status of the occupation, women's organizations at the same time reinforced exclusionary practices and segmentation within the profession, e.g. marginalising racial or classed female minorities and reinforcing existing hierarchies. The way in which women's organizations tried to promote professionalism was within the framework of the 'ideology of merit' and the masculine professional project (e.g. extending education, introducing licensing, etc.).

As I analysed in this chapter, the 'professional project' of Russian counselling seems to be developing differently from its Anglophone counterparts. In contrast to professions in the Anglo-American context, in Russia there seem to be no formal *strategic* courses of action on the part of the profession to achieve closure (e.g. no powerful organizations, no licensure, no active pursuit of increasing qualification requirements, no direct disagreements with other mental health related professions etc.). This, as I discussed, may be a result of the differences in relationship between the professions and the state in Russia. Furthermore, even though psychological counselling is largely female dominated there are no all-female (or all-male) professional associations within the profession. Although organizations as agents of professionalisation are gendered in their membership representation (there are more men in the executive positions than women), they are (technically) meant to represent the interests of the counsellors regardless of sex. The question is though, whether these different premises and the different route to professionalisation create a different situation of professional development and/or yield different consequences for women? I would argue that in spite of the fact that there are few 'formal' occupational closure strategies employed by the counselling profession in Russia, there are still informal exclusionary practices developed through professional discourses and practices, which are based on the dominant gender and professional ideologies in Russia. Even though developed in the context of female-dominated professions these strategies can be exclusionary for certain categories of women (and men).

As I have analysed so far, the process of professionalisation is quite messy and unstructured: there is virtually no professional infrastructure, professional organizations are

weak, education is determined by the state which cannot assure its standards, the professional community is rather atomised, licensing does not exist, and formal credential requirements are not increasing. However, in this situation of a lack of official/conventional occupational closure strategies, exclusionary mechanisms are still developed within professional discourses and practices. There seems to be a development of what I would call ‘grassroots occupational closure strategies’. There are at least three such strategies.

For instance, as I showed in Chapter 3, counsellors take pride in constant training and qualification upgrade. The number of hours and the amount of money they spend on CPD training and workshops is staggering. This excess of training is partly due to the fact that university education does not provide enough practical training and partly it is due to the desire for new knowledge. But one of the functions this process performs is that of a signifier of the level of professionalism. Due to various flaws in state education system analysed in this chapter, completing a psychology degree is not seen as a guarantee of professionalism among psychologists. There is no formal licensing or a strong professional organization, membership of which would serve as recognition of professionalism. Thus specialists have to find a way to distinguish themselves and they do it by obtaining as many certificates as possible. And they found it in continuous CPD as I argued in Chapter 3. However, in this situation where there is no upper limit and no requirement of what the top level of education should be, the process of getting credentials turns into an eternal race for perfection. As scholars argue (Hogan, D. 1979; House 1996; 2001) one of the negative side effects of licensing and credentialism in the Anglo-American context is that it discriminates against minorities, i.e. establishing extensive professional demands in terms of training makes it harder for women or racial minorities to enter the profession. In Russia, although the formal qualification requirements are rather low, the ‘informal’ demand for constant training (which is implicit in professional circles) acts as an exclusionary strategy.¹⁷⁶ As I suggested, it marginalises those practitioners who cannot constantly pay for training (e.g. younger people, women with lower incomes, men who feel like they have to be breadwinners), effectively making this profession an exclusionary domain of middle-class women. Furthermore, it also means that a significant amount of earnings (considering that the salaries are not very high) is spent on acquiring credentials which in turn keeps earnings at a low level.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ The interesting thing is that chasing qualifications may seem paradoxical bearing in mind that clients usually do not ask and do not care about therapists credentials (as discussed in earlier chapters). Thus, this obsession with qualification is an implicit rule within the psychological community and usually earning qualifications is a way to be recognized by fellow professionals, rather than a strategy to gain more clients.

¹⁷⁷ Apart from fulfilling implicit professional demands, chasing professional qualification can also stem from the internal sense of what it means to be a professional. Some interviewees said that they did not feel able to

The lack of a formally set standard of professionalism also results in the development of alternative measures of expertise, for instance that of age. As I showed in the previous chapters, age was seen as one of the most important requirements for one's career success. It was easier for a middle-aged person who has just retrained (for 3 years) as a psychologist from being a chemist to get a job than for a 28-year-old, who has a PhD in counselling psychology. Age was also a more critical factor for women's employment, since due to the lack of men even young men had certain employment privileges. This age preference partially rests on the assumption that clients prefer older specialists. However, as I showed in Chapter 3, psychologists themselves believed that age matters more than credentials. Thus, age becomes a means of professional exclusion. The younger counsellors (particularly younger female counsellors) are widely marginalised (see Chapter 3). Even if highly educated, they get little respect and credit from clients and/or their older colleagues. This is a deeply exclusionary 'strategy', because if expertise equals age in both professional and public discourses then there is no chance to overcome this 'professionalisation' barrier.

Finally, in the grassroots drive for professionalisation the discourses of calling and vocation were invoked. As I showed in Chapter 4, 'true' professionalism was contrasted with business and money making. 'True' professionals were seen to have professional and clients' interests as their driver. Earning money was regarded as a by-product of this work, never as a legitimate goal. These discourses were more prevalent among women, since men could escape this by virtue of the male breadwinner discourse. This situation, as I analysed in Chapter 3, is a product of the influence of the discourses of professionalism and facilitated by the fact that many (female) specialists who comprise the majority of the work force are quite well-off and, therefore, could 'afford' to take on this kind of discourse (bolstered by the prevailing male breadwinner ideology). In the context of rather challenging working conditions and the overwhelming amount of working hours (as I explained in Chapter 4) the denial of the earning potential of the profession is basically very disadvantageous. As I argued it excludes those who cannot 'afford' to be this kind of professional (e.g. working-class women, young women etc.) and through this taboo of prioritising monetary goals, in part, keeps women dependent on their families and partners.

Thus, the outcome of the under-regulation of the profession is controversial. On the one hand, the lack of formal strategies of occupational closure in the counselling

carry out therapy many years after graduation and had to undergo multiple training programs before they gained enough confidence to practise. 'Obsessive' attendance of various workshops may also be a way to interact with and participate in the professional community. Some of my interviewees (especially from Vladivostok, read – smaller city) said that the professional community was under-developed (no association, no interest groups) thus, there was no other space to communicate and network with other professionals other than through attending multiple workshops.

professional project and the lack of formal regulations allows various opportunities. It creates the situation where the counsellors are not closely policed which means that there is a freedom to practise almost any kind of therapy and with a minimum professional education level and in any form of employment (e.g. informally, in a private centre etc.). Thus, it seems that there is little that limits one's access to the profession. However, the insufficiency of the professional regulation combined with the desire for professionalisation by this occupational group resulted in the development of what I called 'grassroots closure strategies'. Their un-written nature can make them particularly exclusionary because one's perception of these unwritten professional norms can vary; moreover, there is no gauge of whether the norm is 'achieved'. As I showed, these informal professionalisation strategies are exclusionary for particular categories of women (e.g. younger women, women-only households, less well-off women etc.). Chua and Clegg (1990) use the example of professional closure of British nursing to illustrate how discourses can shape the class, age and gender composition of the occupation. A similar situation occurs in Russian counselling. The ideas of 'professionalism' act as a disciplinary mechanism (Fournier 1999). Furthermore, the example of Russian counselling also shows that 'the ground rules' of professional closure strategies may develop in the discourses and interactions of the practitioners and may not be linked in the absence of and separately from the 'official' closure strategies. These strategies draw both on the dominant patriarchal gender ideology and on the ideology of professionalism. Both ideologies have been widely criticised for their normative power which continues to reproduce hierarchies and exclusions in professional life (Adams and Bourgeault 2004; Evetts 2006; Fournier 1999; Walby 1986; Witz 1990; Watson 2002). The example of Russian counselling once again shows how the joint working of gender discourses, ideology or professionalism and the existing economic situation can shape the gender, age and class composition within the profession, as well as its development.

Conclusions

In this chapter I analysed the process and sites of professionalisation of psychological counselling in Russia. I argued that the model of professionalisation in Russia is different from the Anglophone context due to the different relationship between the state and the professions in Russia. Even though the Soviet regime no longer exists and the state regulation of professions is not as 'visible' or as rigid as it used to be, nevertheless, many professional matters such as education, professional titles and the relationship of employer and employee are still controlled by the state. These regulations are often quite vague and

badly implemented. However, the fact that they exist and are issued by governmental bodies limits the opportunity of the professional community and organisations to exercise influence over these professional issues. Furthermore, because most of the state regulations do not seem to contribute effectively to the development of the profession, the counsellors felt apprehensive about any new guidelines coming from the state. In fact the attitudes towards introducing further strategies of professionalisation (such as licensing or certification) were ambivalent. On the one hand, the counsellors felt that such regulations are necessary in order to raise the quality of service and eradicate malpractice. On the other hand, they were worried about who was going to develop these regulations, how they were going to be exercised, what the process of their implementation would be and what consequences they would have.

Some of the counsellors felt that professional organizations should take on a more active role in the process of professionalisation. However, the situation with professional bodies was quite complicated as well. For one, the counsellors were reluctant to establish organizations due to financial difficulties and a lack of interest on the part of their colleagues. If they did, those (mostly small) organizations were usually formed in order to pursue the individual goals of their originators and did not contribute much to the improvement of the quality of their members or their fields (with the exception of a few that tried to maintain standards). Larger organizations were seen by the counsellors as incapable of providing tangible benefits for their members, therefore interest in their membership was low. Most organizations did not pursue the goal of establishing quality standards in the field and did not have sufficient entry requirements which further prevented them from gaining credibility among the professional community and from becoming a trade mark of quality.

Finally, the interesting thing that emerged was that there seemed to be no gender difference in the way that male and female counsellors talked about professionalisation matters. They seemed to have similar concerns about the role of the state and organizations in the process of professionalisation. However, there were still some gender differences in experiences. It was clear that even though the profession is female dominated, vertical segregation still exists. For instance, there were fewer women in the positions of power in professional psychological organizations and in the positions of power in the ministries that regulate the professionalisation sites of counselling. Women were rather reluctant to pursue administrative roles in organizations. However, these gendered realities were regarded as normal course-of-professional-life details and structural explanations of inequalities were rarely present in my interviewees' accounts.

Many psychologists were convinced that their dismal situation was due to the profession of psychological counselling being still very new. Many saw a lot of potential for this profession and voiced a hope that in time the process of professionalisation would take its course and lead to the successful development of the psychological profession in Russia. However, judging by the interviewees' accounts, it is difficult to say where this successful development will come from. The psychologists seemed to find themselves at an impasse: the professional psychological community in Russia was clearly affected by problems caused by low levels of professionalisation, but at the same time was rather atomised and reluctant to put their efforts together in a collective pursuit of improving their existing situation. The specialists were complaining about the lack of regulation. However they were not sure that they wanted the government to interfere. They craved competent professional organizations but were unwilling to exercise any agency to establish them and/or improve the quality of the existing ones. It seemed that the counsellors hoped that the current situation would sort itself out. However, it was clear that without the active involvement of people in the professional community, without rethinking the potential of collective action and without their combined efforts to take control over professional matters the prospect of a positive change seems rather bleak.

Conclusion

In this thesis I set out to investigate the development of the profession of psychological counselling in post-1989 Russia, focusing particularly on the role of gender in this process. The main research questions that I asked were the following: What factors have shaped the present state of psychological counselling in Russia? How did psychological counselling come to be a feminised profession in Russia? How does the process of professionalisation happen in this transitional society? What role does gender play in structuring the development of this profession? My findings indicate that the development of the counselling profession is a complex process, embedded in and shaped by the cultural, political and economic context of contemporary Russia and its Soviet legacy. The feminisation of counselling is the result of the interplay of the specificities of the profession, the prevailing gender ideology and the larger social, economic and historic context of Russia. The level of professionalisation in psychological counselling is shaped by the specifics of professional regulation in Russia, the nature of psychological services, and the sense of agency (or lack of it) on the part of the professional community. My analysis shows that the present state of the counselling profession is a product of both structural and interactive forces, of which gender is an integral and crucial part. On the one hand the development of the profession was shaped by the economic, legal and political circumstances of Russia and the gender regimes imbricated in these structures. On the other hand, it was also influenced by the ways in which the specialists constructed, interpreted and negotiated the meanings and mechanisms of gender and professionalisation.

In order to unpack the mechanisms of the professional progress and to understand the interplay of gender and professionalisation I chose to use qualitative interviews (Chapter 2) through which I examined counsellors' perceptions of their profession. In the thesis I then provided a historical development of the mental health professions in the Soviet Union (Chapter 1); analyses of the perceptions of the counsellors of their professional education (Chapter 3); their professional experiences (Chapter 4) and their views on gender (Chapter 5). Finally, I scrutinised the broader post-1989 context of professional development and analysed the role of the state, professional organizations and the professional community in the process of professionalisation (Chapter 6).

In the Introduction I briefly charted the rise of the psychology profession in Russia, outlined my interest in the topic, and reviewed related literature. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of this thesis, it was necessary to deal with a variety of research in

several key areas such as the sociology of professions, the sociology of work and employment, studies on gender and work, feminisation and professionalisation studies, Russian and Soviet studies, literature in psychology and psychotherapy. Analysing such a wide range of sources and exploring the development of the counselling profession from a variety of angles helped me identify some gaps in the existing research and find ways to fill them through analysing my own data. Thus, my research is thus an original contribution to the understanding of the relationship of gender and professionalisation in transitional economies and is the first comprehensive study of the state of the professionalisation of counselling and psychotherapy in Russia.

In Chapter 1 I outlined the development of the mental health professions in the Soviet Union and showed that although psychological counselling is a new profession, it is heavily influenced by the legacy of Soviet psychiatry, psychology and psychotherapy. As I have demonstrated, Soviet psychiatry was notorious for being used as a tool of suppressing dissident voices by the state authorities (Bloch and Reddaway 1977; 1984; Bonnie 2002; Cohen 1989; Koryagin 1989; Krasnov and Gurovich 2007). Even though this abuse is now history, psychiatry still incites fear in people due to the particular nature of its treatments, the conditions of its institutions and facilities, and the mere fact that it deals with mental illness. I argued that in the absence of education on psychological matters in Russia people tend to confuse different types of mental health services and transfer their apprehensive attitudes onto the new psychological counselling services.

Similar to psychiatry, Soviet psychology was imbricated in communist ideology and had a mainly scientific focus. A ban on those branches of psychology that were considered the domain of ‘western bourgeois’ scientists had a drastic effect on the development of applied psychology and counselling in Russia. Although plenty of therapeutic approaches are practiced by Russian psychologists today, only a few of them have been created by Russian specialists because Russian schools of therapeutic approaches in psychology were repressed at their very root and have barely recovered.

Psychotherapy in the Soviet era was practised exclusively by psychiatrists and was seen as secondary to drug treatment. The techniques and methods used were very limited. At the beginning of the 1990s plenty of different therapies flooded into Russia and now they are primarily utilized by psychologists outside medical institutions. However, the fact that psychotherapy was initially practised only by doctors now causes a problem of sharing the jurisdiction and the title ‘psychotherapist’ (which is seen to have more status than, for example, a counsellor) between medical specialists and psychologists, despite the fact that the latter are primary practitioners of psychotherapeutic approaches. Other specificities of the mental health sphere such as the issues of defining the fields of competence, the nature

of the services etc. also influenced the process of the development of counselling as I showed in my analytical chapters.

Chapter 2 focused on the methodology and outlined the issues involved in carrying out qualitative research in Russia. The starting point of my investigation was experience: my own experience of undertaking a psychology degree in Russia and the experiences of my interviewees, the 26 practising psychologists with fascinating work and life histories, backgrounds and views. I showed that undertaking a qualitative study in Russia represented various practical challenges during the process of recruiting interviewees and interviewing them. I reflected on my position as an 'in-between' (i.e. both an insider and an outsider) and how it was sometimes difficult to negotiate during the interview and writing-up process. I also showed how my age, education, language, nationality and institutional affiliation affected the process of research, and emphasised the importance of exercising reflexivity in the course of undertaking my study. My findings indicate that overall, this choice of methodology proved to be a success, since many of the issues that emerged have never been touched upon in previous (mainly qualitative) studies.

In the first analytical chapter (Chapter 3) I investigated the professional education of counsellors and the reasons why women are attracted to this field. My analysis showed that although a certain percentage of my respondents chose this profession or re-trained to be a counsellor for career purposes, embarking on a psychology degree was not always labour market-related. My findings indicate that psychology degrees were used for a variety of purposes especially by those who were re-training (i.e. getting a second university education). First, studying psychology was a way of dealing with personal psychological issues, since due to the novelty of the profession it was difficult to find a qualified therapist and since turning to a psychotherapist is still very much stigmatised while education is highly valued. Second, embarking on a university degree in psychology was used as a means of achieving a higher social status for the individual, often among women from the more affluent social classes. Finally, a second higher education in psychology was used as a tool for advancing one's present employment. I argued that such different 'uses' of a higher education degree are a peculiarity of the Russian context since such practices are not common in the western context. Furthermore, these non-labour market related entry reasons were mainly articulated by women in my study, which was due to the prevalence of the male breadwinner ideology. The counsellors were also constantly engaged in continuing professional development which, similar to university training, served more than just an educational purpose. I suggested that besides offering the counsellors practical experience which they were short of, continuous participation in qualification up-grades was also an unwritten 'requirement' in order to be regarded as a

professional by one's colleagues, a way to distinguish oneself in the absence of clearly marked professional requirements and a way to interact with the professional community.

Although both male and female interviewees showed initial interest in psychology when choosing it as a profession, women were still the majority of the psychology students and were predominant in the profession as a whole. I argued that this situation of feminisation was due to a combination of factors: the specificities of the profession, the organisation of professional education and the prevalent discourses on gender roles. As I pointed out, there was a long 'zero period' at the start of psychological counsellors' careers when one had to constantly invest in education and qualification upgrades. Therefore the profession did not offer immediate financial rewards. Due to the lack of a professional infrastructure the professional route to success was also quite vague and the salaries of even successful practitioners were not very high compared to other types of business. As a result this profession seemed to be unattractive for men because according to the prevailing gender rhetoric they were considered to be primary breadwinners. Women on the other hand could 'afford' to engage in counselling because they were not seen and did not regard themselves as main breadwinners. The existence of the option to undertake a second/third university education and the fact that more women than men could afford to re-train as psychologists contributed to the growing number of female students in this field. In the light of the existing gender discourses, it was therefore socially acceptable for women to be 'sponsored' by a husband, partner, or family while studying and working in a profession that did not instantaneously bring financial rewards.

My findings also indicate that although the profession was feminised, the professional experiences were not the same for different categories of women. For instance, not all categories of women could 'afford' to become or re-train as counsellors. As I showed, the long and expensive education made this profession the domain of middle-class women. Although the reasons for becoming a counsellor were different for different categories of people who re-trained as counsellors, one common thing was that the decision to change one's profession was not usually done for economic survival reasons. I demonstrated that this was a profession where middle-aged women had an advantage. Although many young women study to become counsellors, their senior counterparts seem to have a much better chance of building a successful career. First, this is because life experience is equated with professional competence in this job (both by clients and by the specialists themselves) and therefore older women had an advantage in attracting clients. It was also easier for re-trainers to get into university; provided they had the possibility to fund their education, there was virtually no entry examination. Finally, most of my mature interviewees had grown-up children so they had more time to devote to getting extra

qualifications etc. Thus, ageism in this profession was a very prominent factor and significantly disadvantaged younger specialists, especially younger women.

Through scrutinising the interplay of the professional training and the gender regimes in Russian society, I demonstrated the role of gender in the formation of the profession at the stage of education, the reasons for, and the hierarchies of the feminisation of counselling. I argued that both gender stereotypes and the male breadwinner model are problematic because their persistence leads to the devaluation of women's work and also limits the opportunities for men to enter this profession.

In Chapter 4 I analysed the professional experiences of counsellors and various challenges that they met in their day-to-day work. I explored a number of issues regarding professional practice: the reasons for multiple job-holding and the reasons why it was difficult to earn in this profession. My research indicated that all of my interviewees did several jobs. They undertook individual and group counselling, worked with businesses and organizations, taught at universities, provided training and workshops for fellow practitioners etc. On the one hand, the breadth of application of psychology and counselling meant that the counsellors had the opportunity to engage in a wide range of professional activities. On the other hand, I argued that even though some specialists did multiple jobs voluntarily many were forced to do so and my analysis of the difficulties of work in various sectors of economy helped explain why.

The reason why the majority of specialists had multiple jobs was that working in one job and in one sector of the economy could not provide all the necessary employment benefits. The jobs in the state sector, although very low-paid, were retained for reasons of (mostly psychological) security and stability, for gaining networks and connections, and for keeping an official work record which was later used to calculate the eligibility for and the amount of one's pension. Moreover, working in a university or a medical facility (the state sector) was partly a source of private clients since the counsellors had a chance to invite their students or patients to become their private clients. The option of working in the private sector, for example in centres offering psychological services, was more appealing. Many preferred to work in such centres because they provided a sense of professional community, reduced managerial and administrative hustle, and offered decent earnings. However, smaller cities (e.g. Vladivostok) did not have such centres. Some counsellors worked in organisational counselling (e.g. large private firms) which offered a good income but as I showed in this thesis this had its drawbacks in terms of low professional autonomy. The majority of the psychologists also had a private practice. In addition they provided professional training for other therapists, which was the most profitable activity. Working privately with individual clients or groups was professionally

interesting, provided financial rewards and assured professional autonomy. However, the main problem with private practice was that only a few specialists were officially registered, while the majority of specialists were pushed into the informal sphere. This situation was due to the complicated procedures for establishing small firms and the financial difficulty to keep a one's registered practice afloat (which was due to heavy taxation, high rent and the unstable flow of clients). I argued that operating informally had several negative consequences for the practitioners. Working in the informal sector provided no legal or social protection or benefits. Furthermore, working informally did not facilitate the improvement of the status and credibility of the profession, which in turn meant that clients were less willing or ready to pay for these services.

I also suggested that the problem of earning money was not only rooted in the fact that a single job did not pay enough but it was also a result of the uneasy relationship of counselling services to charging money (due to the 'care' nature of the profession and the rhetoric of the work as a 'calling' which ran counter to the notion of seeing the job as a business), and of the inability/unwillingness of clients to pay (which was partly due to the fact that psychology as expertise is still not fully established and credibility through providing quality has not yet been gained). The difficulties related to earnings were exacerbated by the under-development of the professional infrastructure. The lack of established ways of entering the profession meant that getting a job was mainly done through networks which reproduced gender, age and class exclusions. The lack of official ways of advertising (e.g. registers of specialists) partly caused the irregular flow of clients. Thus the most common and practically the only way of advertising was a word of mouth. Finally, there was a lack of action to combat professional difficulties that was due to the atomised nature of the professional community and the under-development of the professional organizations. I suggested that the fact that success or failure was seen as an entirely 'personal achievement' prevented the specialists from addressing the structural issues at work and reproduced the difficulties in their professional practice.

My research showed that the experience of these professional conditions was gendered. For instance, men seemed to have fewer problems regarding earning money as a goal in this profession than women since they believed they had to be breadwinners. Women were also affected by the male breadwinner ideology but in contrast to men, it made seeing the income-earning potential of this job more difficult for them. Thus, not only did the male breadwinner ideology shape the gender distribution in the profession, it also structured the way men and women thought about charging fees and about their earnings.

The employment opportunities of the counsellors also differed by gender in all sectors. Ninety percent of my interviewees said that men had a better chance of making a career in this profession. Interestingly, women in this profession exhibited more hostility and discrimination towards their female colleagues than their male peers. Such gender discrimination against women and preference for men was primarily explained by men's token status in this profession. However, it was also rooted in and exacerbated by the ways in which gender roles and hierarchies were constructed by counsellors as I suggested in Chapter 5.

There I considered the counsellors' views of the role of gender in their professional practice and in society in general and unpacked the ways in which these views influenced the development of the profession. The striking feature of my sample was that the interviewees demonstrated very essentialist views of gender and, moreover, the views of the same participant could often be inconsistent in the course of the interview. I showed that although some interviewees defined the profession as appropriate for any gender, many women saw it as 'feminine' while men, on the contrary, aligned it with stereotypical characteristics associated with their own gender. However, consistent with other research (Acker 1992; Benschop and Doorewaard 1998; Cejka and Eagly 1999) even though some feminine characteristics were seen to be important, nevertheless, women were supposed to exhibit 'neutral' characteristics, and 'excessive' femininity (such as wearing a pink sweater) was reproached. Men however were encouraged to show 'masculine' (or what were seen to be masculine) characteristics because the profession was regarded as 'too feminised'. The alleged 'lack of masculinity' in this profession was also exacerbated by the professional belief that certain cases could be better treated by a male therapist. As my study indicates, these views about the lack of men in the profession directly translated into hiring preferences whereby men had an advantage over women even if they did not have the necessary qualifications. However, the interesting thing was that in spite of admitting sex discrimination women saw this situation as given and did not question it. The differences in professional careers were attributed to the low number of men in the profession and people's individual characteristics.

Another inconsistency that emerged from my data was the differences in women's views on masculinities which changed according to whether they thought about men as specialists or as men. Male specialists were 'cherished' for their 'unique male perspective' and their masculinity was seen as a useful therapeutic tool in certain cases. However, when women spoke about their male colleagues not as specialists but as males, most of them saw them as 'effeminised' and devoid of masculinity. Thus, male specialists were ascribed 'masculinity' just on the basis of their sex, but since women saw male as counsellors 'too

feminine' it was not clear how the latter were supposed to or did 'produce' the expected characteristics. I showed that my interviewees displayed no reflexivity about the inconsistencies in their views on gender issues. I argued that this contradiction in how masculinity was perceived in this profession can be understood through scrutinising the way in which masculinity is defined in the Russian context. I suggested that masculinity was mainly tied to the ability to earn money, to be a breadwinner. Both men and women in my sample were adamant that men are and should be primarily breadwinners in a family in spite of the fact that many women in Russia are the main earners and many of my interviewees were too. Therefore, my data shows that the feminisation of this profession on the one hand echoed the Soviet way of the division of labour (Ashwin 2006a; Einhorn 1993; Dodge 1987; Rzhantsyna 2000; Katz 1997; Silverman and Yanovich 2000): it was a field which required (stereotypically) female characteristics and involved care and was thus constructed as more 'suitable' for women. On the other hand, due to the transitional changes in the economy, counselling was also (re)defined as 'women's work' (and feminised) on the financial basis (it is not 'manly' to earn little money).

The male breadwinner ideology causes discrimination and inequality in hiring and at the same time it is used to justify these inequalities. It also led to women's devaluation of their own work. Thus, I argued that the persistence of these views is a sign of desperation on the part of women in the Russian society. There is a general disappointment with Russian men, for instance, men share little to no household work, they drink alcohol to excess, they are seen as 'de-masculinised' by Soviet rule, and there is general lack of them so a woman is supposed to be happy to have one (Ashwin 2000a; 2002; Kay 2000; 2007; Kiblitckaya 2000a; 2000b). Therefore, women (who bear the double burden of work and home) are told and advised by popular (and therapeutic) discourses to 'nurture' men and to not be 'too demanding'. It is thus not surprising that women want men to work and be breadwinners because women see it as men's last responsibility and if they let go of it, they may end up with even more weight on their shoulders. I suggested that the persistence of male breadwinner discourses signifies a deep social, political and economic crisis. The positive sides of Russia's socialist past has vanished, and what has come in from the 'west' is not a strong feminist agenda or equal opportunities legislation, but the ideals of neo-liberalism and individualisation. The lack of reflexivity on gender issues prevents the structural factors of inequality in the counselling profession and in the wider societal context from being addressed.

After analysing the individual experiences of the counsellors' work, education and their views on gender, in my last analytical chapter (Chapter 6) I focused on an analysis of the structural and institutional factors that shape the state of the professionalisation of

counselling in Russia, by analysing the agents of professionalisation: the professional community, professional organizations and the state. I argued that the professional regulation in the field is under-developed, which is a result of several factors: the conditions of state regulations, the counsellors' attitudes to this regulation and the inability or unwillingness of the professional community to actively engage in organising. Furthermore, I illustrated that the experiences of organising and organisational structures are also shaped by gender.

The attitudes towards licensing in this profession were ambivalent. I found that, my interviewees were concerned about potential licensing bodies, the process of licensing, its implementation and potential implications. Some anxieties regarding licensing resonated with those articulated among psychologists in western contexts (e.g. hesitation as to whether licensing is an appropriate mode of regulation for this profession, a worry that licensing can lead to the rise of fees and limit creativity and diversity of approaches). Other concerns were very context specific and echoed wider problems of the operation of regulation in Russia (e.g. the discontent with widespread corruption and bribery in Russia that makes buying fake certificates possible, or the doubts in the ability of the state authorities to produce adequate regulation and assure its fair implementation). Despite the issues voiced, the majority of specialists admitted the necessity for firmer professional regulations in order to eliminate charlatans and under-qualified practitioners who discredit the profession. My analysis, however, demonstrated that, apart from the absence of licensing, the low level of service quality was also due to a number of other reasons, for instance, the low level of educational standards, the circulation of particular professional discourses (e.g. where age was equated with professionalism, see Chapter 2), and not least the weakness of the professional bodies and their inability to be the guarantors of quality.

My interviewees were concerned with the under-development of the professional organizations and most of them did not belong to any. I argued that this situation is due to a number of reasons. The majority of professional matters (e.g. professional titles, educational standards, the relationship between the employer and employee, entrepreneurial activity etc.) are regulated by the state, which restricts the ability of professional organizations to control these sites. Equally, the organizations did not put much effort into increasing their power through other means (e.g. by raising the quality and exclusiveness of their membership). Most organizations struggled to survive financially or were established to fulfil the specific individual goals of their organizers and therefore their membership was often organised on the principle of personal connections rather than professional credentials and aptitude. This made their membership unattractive for the specialists in the field (e.g. my interviewees complained that membership in professional

bodies did not bring any benefits). Therefore, there seemed to be a vicious circle: the counsellors were discontent with the work of the organizations, but not willing to put an effort into organising and strengthening the professional community, and expected things to change of their own accord or through someone else's efforts. The professionals in this field were struggling to survive but did so individually rather than by way of any collective strategies. They were disillusioned with the state's way of organising professional matters, but still kept waiting for regulation to 'descend from above' (as it used to during Soviet rule) rather than taking control themselves.

Although there was not much difference in how male and female counsellors spoke about licensing and other professionalisation issues, at a closer look, the experiences of organising were still gendered. There was obvious vertical gender segregation at the upper executive levels of the professional organizations and state bodies that were in charge of regulating counselling. As I showed, it can be more difficult for women to earn in this profession and therefore they may have less time to engage in such community activities. Moreover, women perpetuated the ideas that men are more suited for organisational jobs, and were not willing to cooperate with and help their female colleagues which made them even more professionally isolated. Thus, it is possible to suggest that one of the reasons why the professionalisation process has gone rather slowly is that the majority of professionals are women who are not encouraged, not interested, or do not have an opportunity to participate in organisational matters.

I also suggested that despite the fact that the professional project of counselling in Russia does not seem to employ official closure strategies (e.g. licensing, certification) which in the western context are argued to disadvantage women in the professions (see e.g. Glazer 1991; Witz 1990; 1992), exclusionary mechanisms were still developed within professional discourses and practices. The examples of what I called 'grassroots occupational closure strategies' are the unwritten rules which equated age with experience, an almost forced engagement in an obsessive qualification upgrade process and the urge to adhere to the ethics of a 'calling' especially among female counsellors. Although these professional 'norms' were discursive and were not formally institutionalised, they still significantly disadvantaged younger practitioners, women from less affluent backgrounds, and, partially, men.

I suggested that the existing attitudes towards organising and the existing state of professional infrastructure and organizations benefits neither the profession nor the practitioners, and suggested that without bringing in the gender dimension or rethinking the potential of organising the prospects of successful professionalisation are rather bleak.

As I argued in this thesis, the development of the counselling profession in Russia is shaped by a variety of factors: history, politics, the economy, as well as social, professional and gender norms and ideologies. I showed that the development of psychological counselling reflects the general pattern of gender structures and relations in the Russian labour market and society (see e.g. Ashwin 2006a; 2006c; Einhorn 1993; Khotkina 1994; Rzhanitsyna 2000). I unpacked the ways in which some of these general gendered patterns operate in the profession and how they influence the process of professionalisation. There are also further questions that arise from my findings. For instance, little is known about how the clients and the general public in Russia think about counselling, its image and quality. An interesting issue to look at is the relation of psychological and ‘magic’ services, and the persisting ‘desire’ of people to resort to the latter. Further investigation is needed to explore the link between the state of the professionalisation of counselling and the provision and accessibility of these services to the general public. A more detailed analysis of women’s networks and the mechanisms that trigger hostility between women in this profession would also be interesting. Furthermore, there remains a question of how to tackle the wide-spread apathy towards organising. Because my sample was made up of primarily middle-class women, it would be interesting to find out whether women who belong to other social categories or occupations are more critical of gender inequalities or more willing to take action. Finally, the question is why do Russian women perpetuate the gender ideology that is obviously not benefitting their position, and how might one set about changing these views?

As I have mentioned the striking finding was that there was virtually no questioning of the existing gender regime and inequalities in the workplace among my interviewees. Even in the face of obvious inconsistencies between discourses and reality, men and women still persisted with their beliefs (or desires to believe) in gender equality in society. The specialists cited individual factors rather than structural obstacles as predictors of one’s success or failure. Sometimes, when the inequalities were too obvious to ignore, the specialists just saw them as a given fact, and justified them through rather essentialist gender discourses. There was practically no reflexivity about the existing gender norms and roles. So why do members of a profession that is meant to be reflexive about the self and relationships, turn a blind eye to obvious gender inequalities and are compliant with existing gender norms which obviously sustain these patterns?

One explanation could lie in the very nature of psychology and psychological approaches with which the specialists deal. My interviewees tended to practise family systems, family constellations therapy, psychoanalysis etc. which promote very essentialist views of gender differences and gender roles (see e.g. Bohan 1993; Kagan and Tindall

2003; Sayers 1992; Ussher 1992; Worrell and Remer 2003). Other psychotherapy approaches that my participants practiced (e.g. cognitive therapies, body-oriented therapy etc.) did not necessarily endorse stereotypical views of gender roles but did not encourage critical reflection on assess them either. Thus, although psychotherapeutic approaches promote self-reflexivity, the ‘objectivity’ paradigm imbricated in psychological theories does not seem to offer the counsellors any grounds for questioning existing gender stereotypes.

It can also be argued that a lack of reflexivity and the acceptance of gender inequalities are a product of the environment in which my interviewees live and work. For instance, the European Union has invested much money into women’s employment research and gender mainstreaming and there have been many discussions on the matters of gender and work (Crompton 1999). Many European countries have introduced policies on equal pay and equal opportunities, which seem to make at least some positive difference women’s position in employment (Crompton and Le Feuvre 2000; Hoskyns 1999). In contrast, as I pointed out in Chapter 5, there has been virtually no mention of gender issues in Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union (Brainerd 1998; 2000; Shlapentokh 1999; Silverman and Yanovich 2000). As a backlash to the Soviet ‘over-emancipation’ of women, essentialist gender views have become even more pronounced (Posadskaya 1994b; Shiriaev 1999; Temkina and Zdravomyslova 2003). Although the position of women in the labour market has noticeably worsened, there is virtually no feminist movement (Kay 2000a; Voronina 1994) and next to no female representation in the structures of authority (Konstantinova 1994; Moser 2003). As Kanap’ianova (2008: 73) writes, ‘in Russia no social forces have an interest in seriously securing the expansion of women’s and men’s equal participation in state [or in any other kind of] decision making.’ But even those women who are in power do not ‘dare’ to pursue any feminist agenda, in part out of fear of being labelled too conservative or too biased.

Apart from a lack of action there is also a lack of alternative discourses on gender and equality. Looking back at my own experience of doing a psychology degree in Russia, I can say that although some gendered realities did not seem right, the problem was that I did not really have any means to question the state of affairs. My reflexivity on gender and professional matters grew out of the four years of exposure to feminist and sociological literature and thinking outside Russia. There is still only limited research on gender that is mainly produced in Moscow and St.Petersburg, and seems to have little public outreach.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸ My own impression is that the centres for gender studies which are located mainly in Moscow and St. Petersburg seem to reproduce the same pattern of membership based on personal connections and networks that exist elsewhere in Russia. They seem to remain rather closed communities. Their websites usually advertise various seminars on gender, but there is little publicity about them. Most of the time, these

‘Feminism’ is close to a swear word in Russia and there are virtually no activist or scholarly forces to counter these perceptions. The overall political situation in Russia is such that thinking about equality and diversity is not something that is widely practised. Russia’s democracy and the existence of civil freedoms are very questionable. The mock presidential elections of 2007; the violent attacks on gay parades in 2006; the implicit (and explicit) silencing of human rights activists, the lack of governmental attention to the needs of people in other regions than Moscow – all this creates a situation where many people are not used to and are not encouraged to think critically, let alone to express their criticisms in action (see Richter 2008; Dewhirst 2001; Ordeshook and Myagkov 2008). As the popular Russian saying goes ‘an initiative is [still] punishable’. Thus, when one is submerged under the mass of everyday survival problems and not surrounded by a like-minded community or a community at all, it is no wonder that it is difficult to think (or act) differently, even if one has two university degrees.

The interesting thing about psychological counselling in Russia is that this profession has the potential to become high-income and high-status work done by women. However, economic and political and gender structures seem to impinge on this possibility. But as I argued, it was not the structure alone that produced the situation of little hope. As was clear from my interviews, there was a general reluctance in relation to collective action and little belief that one (especially if one is a woman) can make a difference. Although these attitudes are not unfounded, my research exemplified the importance of rethinking gender, agency and communal action in order to change the course of professional development. The fact that certain gender and professionalisation patterns in Russia linger from Soviet times and have not changed in the past 20 years means that the change that people are awaiting is unlikely to come without an effort, both individual and collective. Women also cannot be seen just as passive victims of structure. As was clear from my sample, women were interpreting and negotiating many aspects of their work. They were also (at least to a certain extent) making their choices. The problem, however, was that they were making them within the framework of the existing gender and work ideology, without being aware of or considering other possibilities. The challenge therefore, is to actively keep searching for ways to confront Russia’s specific gendered culture and make new and alternative possibilities visible.

programs do not ever reach beyond the Ural Mountains. Thus, there is little evidence of the claimed ‘rapid growth’ of gender studies (Temkina and Zdravomyslova 2003) beyond Moscow.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: Mini Biographies of My Interviewees

Abbreviations used:

MF – Moscow, Female

MM – Moscow, Male

VF – Vladivostok, Female

VM – Vladivostok, Male

The number after the letters indicates the order of the interviews (1 for the first interview, 2 for the second etc.)

MF1, 28. Holds a Candidate of Science degree in Psychology. Psychology was her first and only university degree. After 4 years in practice left psychology for personal reasons and currently works in television. Specialised in existential psychotherapy and worked as a counsellor in the psychological centre of the university. Cohabiting with a partner. No children.

MF2, 36. Holds a Specialist degree in Psychology. Psychology is her 2nd degree preceded by a degree in Russian Philology. Specialises in psychoanalysis and transactional analysis. Has private practice, works in the centre and does organizational counselling. Has practised since 2002. Cohabiting with a partner. No children.

MF3, 28. Holds a Specialist degree in Psychology. Psychology is her 2nd degree preceded by a degree in Pedagogical Psychology. Specialises in existential therapy. She does individual counselling and group training, develops psychological training programs and works with various psychological centres as well as privately. Has practised since 2000. Married, has a child.

MF4, 34. Holds a Specialist degree in Psychology. Psychology is her 2nd degree preceded by training as a florist-designer (vocational college degree). Specialises in transpersonal therapy, but uses an integrative approach. She has private practice. She works with individual clients and groups, does organizational counselling and writes for newspapers. Has practised since 1999. Cohabiting with a partner. No children.

MF5, 41. Holds a Specialist degree in Psychology. Psychology is her 3rd degree preceded by a degree in Physics and Mathematics and a Law degree. Uses integrative approach in

counselling. Director of the psychological centre, she does individual and group counselling, organizational counselling and writes for magazines. Has practised since 2004. Married, has children.

MF6, 28. Holds a Specialist degree in Psychology. Psychology is her first and only university degree. She is an entrepreneur. Works in organizational counselling, financial consulting, coaching, HR. Has worked in the field since 1999. Single, has one child.

MF7, 42. Holds a Specialist degree in Psychology. Psychology is her 2nd degree preceded by a degree in Chemistry. Specialises in existential and narrative therapy. Director of a psychological centre, she does individual and group counselling, writes for magazines and newspapers. Has practised since 1998. Married, has two children.

MF8, 28. Holds a Specialist degree in Psychology. Psychology is her 2nd degree preceded by a degree in Pedagogical Psychology. Uses integrative approach in counselling. Has private practice. She does individual and group counselling, develops psychological training programs. Has practised since 2002. Single, no children.

MF9, 34. Holds a Specialist degree in Psychology. Psychology is her 3rd degree preceded by a degree in Engineering and in Economics. Specialises in existential therapy, narrative approach and family systems therapy. She has a private practice working with individuals and groups and works also in the state narcological dispensary. Has practised since 2001. Married, has a child.

MF10, 53. Holds a Candidate of Science degree in Psychology. Psychology is her 2nd degree preceded by a degree in Theatre Directing. She has developed her own therapeutic approach - art synthesis therapy (officially recognized). She does group counselling, conducts professional workshops and works in a psychiatric hospital. Has practised since 1992. Divorced, has a grown-up child.

MF11, 42. Holds a Specialist degree in psychology. Psychology is her 2nd degree preceded by a degree in Pharmacology. Specialises in family systems therapy, gestalt and family constellations. Director of a social psychological centre for children, does individual and group training, conducts professional workshops, teaches in a university. Has been in the field since 1996. Married, has a child.

MF12, 42. Holds a Candidate of Science degree in Psychology. Psychology is her first university degree. Specialises in psychoanalytic, existential and client-centred approaches. Works as an associate professor in a university and provides individual counselling. Has practised since 1991. Married, has a child.

MF13, 48. Holds a Specialist degree in Psychology. Psychology is her 2nd degree preceded by a degree in Physics. She has a private practice. Does individual (VIP) and group counselling. Has practised since 2001. Divorced, has two children.

MF14, 64. Holds a Candidate of Science degree in Psychology. Psychology is her first and only higher education. A well-known specialist in art therapy, body-oriented therapy, biosynthesis. Also uses cognitive therapy, gestalt and many other approaches. Does individual and group counselling, psychological training, conducts professional workshops and teaches in the university. Has been in the field for more than forty years but has practised since 1991. Married, has two grown-up children.

MF15, 36. Holds a Candidate of Science degree in Psychology. Psychology is her first and only higher education. Uses integrative counselling approach. Had little private practice, has taught psychology in a state military institution since her graduation in 1996. Single, has a child.

MM1, 43. Holds a Specialist degree in Psychology. Psychology is his 2nd degree preceded by training in the military academy. Specialises in body-oriented therapy, art therapy, biosynthesis. He works in a centre and does individual and group counselling, organizational counselling, teaches in the university. Has practised since 1994. Married, has two children.

MM2, 41. Holds a Specialist degree in Psychology. Psychology is his 2nd degree preceded by the degree in Chemistry. Specialises in psychodrama, family systems therapy, family constellations. Does individual and group therapy, conducts professional workshops, teaches in the university. Has practised since 1997. Married, has a child.

VF1, 56. Holds a Candidate of Science degree in Psychology. Psychology is her 2nd degree preceded by a degree in Defectology¹⁷⁹. She specialises in art therapy, body-oriented therapy, family constellations, biosynthesis, and gestalt. Runs a private psychological

¹⁷⁹ Abnormal Child Psychology and Learning Disability.

centre and works with individual clients and groups. She teaches at several universities and conducts professional workshops. Has practiced since 1991. Divorced, has two children.

VF2, 42. Holds a Specialist degree in Psychology. Psychology is her 2nd degree preceded by a degree in Computer Engineering. She runs a private psychological centre, works with individuals and groups, and carried out workshops in the local centre for employment. Has practised since 2001. Married, has two children.

VF3, 52. Holds a Candidate of Science degree in Psychology. Psychology is her 2nd degree preceded by a degree in Medicine. She specialises in psychodrama, Gestalt, family systems therapy and family constellations. She is the head of the Faculty of Psychology of a university and also has a private practice. Has been in the field since 1991. Divorced, has two children.

VF4, 42. Holds a Specialist degree in Psychology. Psychology is her 2nd degree preceded by a degree in Medicine (Candidate of Science degree). Specialises in gestalt, family systems therapy and family constellations. She has a private practice, teaches at several universities and conducts professional workshops. Has practised since 1998. Divorced, has two children.

VF5, 46. Holds a Specialist degree in Psychology, (Candidate degree in progress). Psychology is her 3rd degree preceded by a degree in Economics and in Physical Education. Specialises in family constellations, art therapy, body-oriented therapy. Runs a private centre and does individual and group counselling, coaching, organizational counselling and also teaches in several universities and conducts professional workshops. Married, has two children.

VF6, 49. Holds a Specialist degree in Psychology. Psychology is her 2nd degree preceded by a degree in Geology. Specialises in family systems therapy, family constellations, and gestalt. She has private practice. She works with individual clients and groups and also conducts professional workshops. Has practised since 1992. Divorced, has two children.

VF7, 47. Holds a Specialist degree in Psychology. Psychology is her 2nd degree preceded by a degree in Physics. Specialises in family systems therapy, family constellations. Runs a private psychological centre, does individual counselling and conducts professional workshops. Has practised since 2002. Married, has a child.

VF8, 48. Holds a Specialist degree in Psychology. (Candidate degree in progress). Psychology is her 2nd degree preceded by a degree in Architecture. Specialises in family systems therapy, family constellations, art therapy and cognitive therapy. Has private practice. She does individual counselling, organizational counselling and teaches at the university. Has practised since 2005. Divorced, has two children.

VM1, 42. Holds a Specialist degree in Psychology. Psychology is his 2nd degree preceded by a degree in Economics. Specialises in family systems therapy, family constellations, body-oriented therapy, biosynthesis, art therapy. Runs a private psychological centre and does individual and group counselling as well as organizational counselling. Has practised since 2002. Married, has two children.

APPENDIX II: The Letter of Invitation to Participate In the Study

Dear (name of the person),

My name is Maria Karepova and I am a doctoral researcher at the University of York (Great Britain). I am conducting research on the development of psychological counselling in Russia and women's careers in this profession. I am looking to incorporate first-hand views and attitudes of counsellors in my research. Therefore I want to conduct interviews with practising female counsellors working in Russia. I want to invite you to take part in this research project.

My research aims to understand the development of psychological counselling through investigating personal experiences and views of women who work in this profession. Your decision to share your expert knowledge of the field as well as your experiences and opinions will mean a lot for this project and will be highly appreciated.

The interview is going to be informal and will include the questions about the development of your professional career path, about the difficulties and advantages of working in counselling in Russia, about the current state of professional issues etc. The interview will take about an hour and will be recorded. All interviews are anonymous and your name and personal details will not appear in the study. I shall be conducting interviews in Moscow from 1st of April till 10th of May. If you are interested to take part in this research please reply to this e-mail and then I can phone you to schedule our interview on the date and time that suits you.

If you know any of your colleagues who may be also interested in giving an interview please feel free to pass on my contact details and this e-mail. I am really looking forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely
Maria Karepova

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karepova_maria@mail.ru

Your e-mail was taken from www.psychology-guide.ru

APPENDIX III: The Questionnaire Distributed to the Participants

Personal information questionnaire

- The information you provide will be strictly anonymous
- This information will be used only for the purposes of this research and further publication

1. DOB
2. Marital status
3. Children (number and age)
4. Education (degrees and additional qualifications):

5. How long have you had your private practice?
6. Do you do any other work besides your private practice?

7. How many sessions (on average) do you have a week?
8. How long are your sessions?
9. Where do you see clients?
10. How much (on average) is your one-on-one session?
11. What percentage of your overall working hours do you spend on counselling?

12. What percentage of your overall income does your private practice earn?

Thank you very much!

APPENDIX IV: Interview Schedule

1. Pre-interview:

- Give information about the project
- Inform that person has right not to answer the question should she decide so.
- Remind about recording, anonymity and confidentiality

2. Entry and education

- What was your way into the profession? What influenced your decision to become a counsellor? Where did you work before? Why did you decide to switch to counselling? If it is a second higher education – was it a promising field? Was the entry competition high?
- Where did you study? Did you enjoy your degree program? What was good and what do you think could be improved?
- If it is a first degree: could you tell me what was it like to study psychology before the 1990s? Do you think the way you were taught is somehow different from how psychology students are taught now? Why? Better? Worse? What do you think should be/could be changed?
- What percent of your classmates stayed to work in the profession? Why do you think many people leave this profession?
- Do you attend any qualification up-grade training or workshops? How often? Why do you participate in this training? How useful is it? How do you choose which one to go to?

3. Working in the profession

- If you started your work in the 1990s could you tell me what the transition period was like? What was happening in the profession? How was it developing? What were the working conditions? Did anything change?
- When did you start your private practice? How did it happen and why? What difficulties did you face? What helped you? Do you think it is easier to start a private practice now than it was when you did it? Has anything changed?

- Do you do anything else besides seeing clients? Why do you do other jobs? Is it easy to find a job as a counsellor? What is it like working in the state/private sector organizations?
- What difficulties/challenges do you face in your profession? (in general or in every day practice). How do you deal with them?
- Do you think age plays a role for a counsellor? Why and how?
- What do you like about your profession? How satisfied are you with your work? What are incentives and rewards for you? What keeps you in this profession?

4. Clients

- How would you characterise the client market? Did it change in any way through the years? If it did: why do you think that is?
- What is the gender distribution among clients? Why do you think it is like this?
- How do you 'find' clients or how do they find you?
- Do you think clients prefer female or male counsellors? (Did you ever have a male client refuse the session because he was not comfortable to work with a person of another sex?)
- Do the methods you use to treat male clients differ from those you use to treat female clients?
- What are the main issues that women/men come with into therapy? Did your clients' requests change during these years?

5. Gender in the profession

- Why do you think mostly women choose to work in this profession? Why are there so few men? Where are men in this profession?
- Do you think psychology is 'women's work'? What qualities do you think are important for a counsellor?
- What are the attitudes towards male counsellors in this profession? What are the relations between the professionals in the occupation?
- Do you think women have any advantages/disadvantages in this profession compared to men? Do you think it is easier for a woman to make a career in this female-dominated profession?
- Do you think companies have any gender preferences when employing counsellors? Why?

- Do you think your work as a female psychotherapist differs from a male psychotherapist? Do you think there is a difference in methods according to the gender of a counsellor?
- Do you think there is a lack of men? Do you think there should be more? Why? Why not?
- Do you think the fact that women dominate the profession influences the image of the profession in society? How? Why? Do you think the fact that psychology is female-dominated has an impact on the development of counselling? Can you name any particular difference that women make?

6. Professional matters

- Do you belong to any professional organizations? Why? Why not? What is the role of the professional organization? What role does it play in your professional life?
- Is this profession regulated legally or in any other way? How do you feel about licensing or certification in this profession?
- What is professional community like? Do you find your colleagues supportive?
- What method do you use in your practice? Which therapies do you think are popular? Why?
- Do you think that there is a demand for psychology now? What do you think about the status of the profession? Is it high? Why? Why not?
- How do you think other professionals in the neighbouring field see the status of psychologist?
- What do you think the perception and the image of psychology are today? Do you find it comfortable to say that you are a counsellor? What are the usual reactions?
- What would you like to change to make the occupation work 'better' for you?

APPENDIX V: Consent Form

By signing this form I, _____ (name of participant) _____, confirm that my participation in this study is voluntary. I understand and give my consent that the transcript of my interview will be used by the researcher (Maria Karepova) in her dissertation and in related publications. I also understand and agree that the dissertation and subsequent publications will later be publicly available in libraries and electronic libraries in the UK and elsewhere.

I am aware that my identity will be anonymous and that the information I give will be used for educational and research purposes. I have been informed that the excerpts from my interview will be translated to the best of the researcher's ability and, when used, will convey the meaning of what I said as accurately as possible.

Signature of participant:

Signature of researcher:

Date:

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