

Working mothers and nannies:

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Commercialization of childcare and modifications in the gender contract (a sociological essay).



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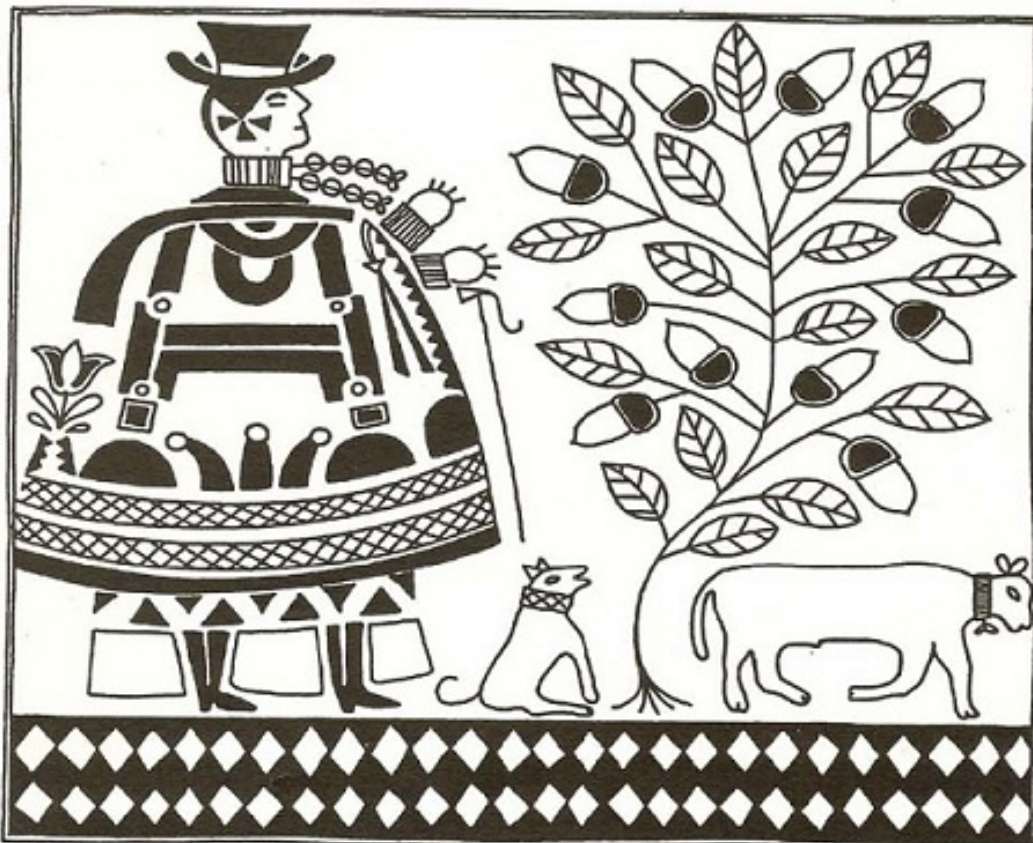
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Working Mothers and Nannies: Commercialization of Childcare and Modifications in the Gender Contract (A Sociological Essay)

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Abstract

The commercialization of domestic care, in particular paid care for small children, strengthens the informal employment market in Russia. To study the emergence and expansion of the strongly gender-marked sector of domestic work, in-depth interviews were conducted with 11 nannies and 41 employers from 2004 to 2006 in St. Petersburg. The author differentiates between two models of domestic childcare that are currently in demand: nannies of the more “patriarchal” (traditional) type and babysitters. Part of the paper is devoted to the problem of building up a relation of trust between the nanny and the parents (usually the mother). The informal nature of their contract, centered around the well-being of the child, conceals the fact that this form of paid domestic work actually contributes to the deepening of social inequality. The author also explores the consequences of the commercialization of childcare for the changes in the gender contract of the “working mother” and the changing role of the grandmother in contemporary Russian society.

Issue

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