

The Double Narrative of Domestic Violence in Contemporary Russia

by

Jessica Lynn Dougherty

Department of Slavic and Eurasian Studies  
Duke University

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Edna Andrews, Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Beth Holmgren

\_\_\_\_\_  
Elena Maksimova

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts  
in the Department of  
Slavic and East Eurasian Studies  
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ABSTRACT

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines how domestic violence is talked about both in the Russian Federation after the fall of the Soviet Union and by the Westerners whom have offered their expertise on the matter. The first chapter shows how there is a divide between Russian journalists and Russian academic scholars in the way domestic violence is viewed and how they believe it can be resolved. Although they both share some consistent values, there is tension between whether a new enforced law can be preventive or if the need to prevention goes beyond the law. The second chapter discusses how Westerners from both the United States and the United Kingdom have used various methods of data collection to find out why the establishment of women's crisis centers have not been as stable and successful as they had hoped. It also explores how Western aid comes with specific standards and how the word 'feminism' has become stigmatized in Russia. Both of these chapters use newspaper articles, journal articles, and interdisciplinary analyses of academic texts to show how domestic violence has become recognized as a major problem in Russia, and how both Russians and Westerners are searching for a solution to end the violence.

Conclusions show how there is still a need for dialogue between Russians who are trying to aid victims of domestic violence and Westerners who have been working in this field for many years. This thesis works as a meta-analysis to show the past and current dialogue happening between Russia and 'Western' scholars.

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## Introduction

Within the past three decades, the visibility of domestic violence has come forefront to the masses due to the formation of women’s crisis centers, the rapid growth of media accessibility, technological advances, and, to an extent, globalization. Domestic violence has long been considered a private or covert matter that has affected countless households and families across the globe throughout the centuries. Many countries, including the United States,<sup>1</sup> have enacted laws or statues to aid in the preventing of domestic violence and to help provide services for the victims. Although the idea of having laws and acts in place may appear to be a resolution, many cases of domestic violence go unreported or charges are dropped against the abuser for a variety of reasons. In Russia there have been no official laws enacted that deal solely with “domestic violence”, though in the Russian Criminal Codex there exists quite a few laws that address violence and how offenders could potentially be prosecuted.<sup>2</sup> The Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs also reported that domestic violence made up an overwhelming 65% of murder cases in 2008.<sup>3</sup> Even at the end of 2014, there has been no constitutional law, statue, or amendment to the Russian Constitution or the Russian Code of Criminal Procedures that persecutes offenders of strictly domestic violence or helps provide aid and services to the victims.

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<sup>1</sup> “Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act,” 113 U.S.C., §47 (2013)

<sup>2</sup> Статьи Уголовного Кодекса Российской Федерации (раздел VII. Преступления против личности.) Стю 110-125 see Appendix A

<sup>3</sup> STOPVAW.org.(2014) October. *Violence Against Women in the Russian Federation*. Minneapolis: The Advocates for Human Rights.



One of the main problems revolving around domestic violence worldwide is the basic understanding of what domestic violence is and all that it encompasses. A large issue that presents itself in global recognition of domestic violence is that organizations such as the United Nations and Amnesty International<sup>4</sup> use the term “violence against women” rather than domestic violence, which in the wording itself fails to recognize that males can also become victims of domestic violence. The primary focus of this thesis is on the violence against women in Russia, but it is important to note the exclusion of male victims from these organizations umbrella term of domestic violence. Truthfully, the male absence at such a global level is only a re-victimization of the struggle against their abusers and almost defeats the purpose of trying to help the victims of domestic violence worldwide. With that being said, the United Nations defines “violence against women” as the following:

any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.<sup>5</sup>

This definition has been used widely by many organizations working for the prevention of domestic violence, or violence against women, across the world. The UN Declaration was only the beginning of a move forward in the right direction, providing countries with a basic guideline on what violence against women was and how to implement ways to

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<sup>4</sup> The United Nations proposed a Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, a model definition of which Amnesty International follows. They use the wording of “gender-based” violence but then subsequently use the term ‘women’ assuming that a majority of victims will most likely be female. For this paper I will use the term domestic violence in a similar way focusing only on female victims.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations, General Assembly. (1993 December 20). *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, A/RES/48/104.

prevent it. Where the Declaration falls short of providing a solid definition of and understanding of violence against women is that it fails to recognize that violence against women is universal, but not unitary<sup>6</sup> in its execution.

Understanding the non-unitary, culturally-determined nature of violence against women and how these forms of violence are perceived within cultural contexts around the world is critical to this analysis. For example, women in Russia may feel that certain scenarios in their everyday life are in no way violent towards them, whereas in the United States women may find these same scenarios to be abusive.<sup>7</sup> Exploring cultural differences and how Russian women and men view domestic violence is vital to fully understanding the cultural differences surrounding domestic violence and also, hopefully, finding a solution to implementing preventative laws and programs. Women's crisis center movements that had formed in Russia in the 1990's, after the fall of the Soviet Union, were only the beginning of Women's crisis centers in the Russian Federation (RF) uphill battle of fighting for equality and gaining financial aid for women victims of violence in the RF. Some scholars believe that the reason that these crisis centers have not been able to stabilize and remain open is because of their ideologies and goals being based loosely off of Western women's groups, which rely heavily on "Western"<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Erez, E. & Laster, K. (2000) *Domestic Violence: Global Responses*. Pp. 1-4. Great Britain: A B Academic Publishers.

<sup>7</sup> This basic idea is discussed throughout the work written by Janet Elise Johnson.

Johson, J.E. (2009). *Gender Violence in Russia: The Politics of Feminist Intervention*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

<sup>8</sup> The idea of 'western' culture originated in Ancient Greece and is used today to refer to most of Europe that is situated west of Greece. For this thesis, when 'western' is used it will be referring to the U.S. and the U.K.

feminism, a term still foreign to many Russians.<sup>9</sup> These claims may hold some truth, but in the Women's crisis center failures it has been successful in bringing to the surface just how different the stigmas and attitudes towards domestic violence are in Russia compared to the West, including important regional differences in the RF. RF crisis center movement did however help in the establishment of a strong foundation needed for any successful women's movements, which according to Erez and Laster is "recognizing that any type of violence towards women is unacceptable and a crime."<sup>10</sup>

The term 'feminism,' though mentioned briefly throughout these next sections, is a topic that would require a more in depth analysis and different discourse compared to the analysis of texts used here. Reference to feminism in this work has been informed by feminist theories provided in Toril Moi's work "I Am Not a Feminist But...: How Feminism Became the F-Word" (2006) and how feminism is shaped by feminist theories prominent here in the United States. But writer Nadezhda Azhgikhina also takes into account how the idea of Russian feminism is fundamentally different from Western European feminism due to the state in which they were formed. She quotes Russian writer Aivazova:

After the French Revolution, women found themselves stripped of those rights which men had won for themselves, and that gave the impetus to feminism in France. In the middle of the nineteenth century in Russia, by contrast, neither men nor women had bourgeois freedoms; men together with women fought for the

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid pp. 27-36

<sup>10</sup> Erez, E. & Laster, K. pp.1-2

right of women to education and work as the start of civil independence for everyone.<sup>11</sup>

Russian feminism developed with both genders working together in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and even through the Soviet period. As for what Russian feminism currently stands for or defines itself as would require an entirely different paper.

Like many women of the world, a vast majority of women in post-Soviet Russia are still currently subjected to patriarchal views of society, which contribute to the lack of success of many of these women's crisis centers and movements. Men have long been considered the 'head of the family' in the world, including Russia where those assumptions even became a 'de facto law,' in the Code of Laws of 1883.<sup>12</sup> Men have always appeared to have dominated most cultural dynamics and roles in Russia and women have seemingly been relegated to the role of domesticated, obedient, and faithful housewife. One of the principles of the Marxist-Leninist state was gender equality, between men and women, no matter what their social class or educational level. During the Soviet period there was little to no research done on the reporting of domestic violence because it was thought to have no existed. However, there were some instances of domestic violence cases that had been reported under the statue of "hooliganism"<sup>13</sup> and

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<sup>11</sup> Azhgikhina, N. (2001).P 216. Empowering Russia's Women: Will Their Potential Be Tapped? In *Russia's fate through Russian eyes: Voices of the new generation*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

<sup>12</sup> Muravyeva, M. (2012). Women in the Nineteenth Century: Lives and Culture. "*Between Law and Morality: Violence against Women in the Nineteenth Century*." Pp 209-238. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers.

<sup>13</sup>Johnson(2005) p148; Hooliganism was : the flagrant violation of public order expressed by a clear disrespect for society. (Article 206, 1960 Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic Criminal Code [RSFSR CrC]). Many acts of violence were reported under this term and no breakdown of crime details were ever reported or maintained therefore making it impossible to truly determine the amount of cases that fall under the term domestic violence.

had even constituted roughly close to 40% of crimes reported under this term.<sup>14</sup> There can be speculation whether any of these crimes of domestic violence that were reported under hooliganism rarely, if at all, went to trial in a court of law. The Soviet Union helped produce generations of men and women who do not seem to grasp the problem of violence towards women or even children. In an article written by Tatiana Zabelina in 1994, she asserts that these generations of Russians produced in the Soviet time are unable to see this problem of violence because they don't "interpret violence or view violence as a violation of individual rights."<sup>15</sup>

So in December 1991, when the Soviet Union fell, the rise of domestically violent crimes rose in Russia, shocking the Russian government.<sup>16</sup> They had assumed that their data ensuring them that violence against women was going down was correct and therefore provided little attention and no aid towards these women's centers urging the government for funding for shelters, hotlines, and other various needs to help women victims of violence. The problem with RF data from this time was that it was restricted to the reporting of rape across Russia. These reports showed that the occurrence of rapes

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<sup>14</sup> Johnson, J.E. (2005). Ruling Russia. "Violence against Women in Russia." Pp. 147-158. Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

<sup>15</sup> Zabelina, T. (1994) December. Gender, Generation and Identity in Contemporary Russia. "*Sexual violence towards women*." pp 169-188. New York, NY: Routledge.

<sup>16</sup> Johnson (2005) pp. 147-158

were dropping dramatically during the 1990's.<sup>17</sup> This reporting led many government officials, who were primarily males, to believe that they were controlling violence against women effectively. Their false sense of crime deterrence however was dispelled by new reports showing that other crimes against women were nearly doubled by the end of a ten year span between 1991 and 2001 according to reports by the MVD<sup>18</sup> in Russia. The following data table provided in the work written by Janet Elise Johnson in 2005 breaks down the data of those ten years in 4 different categories:

**Table 1.1 Registered Violent Crimes in Russia (1991-2001)**

Year	Rapes and Attempted Rapes (of women by men)	Acts of Grave Bodily Harm by Men (against women)	Acts of Hooliganism by Men (against women)	Intenti onal Murders or Attempted Murders by Men (of women)
1991	14,073 (13,902)	24,496 (2,111)	77,922 (4,426)	12,102 (1,422)
1992	13,663 (11,512)	27,568 (2,668)	83,664 (5,570)	13,978 (1,794)
1993	14,440 (12,945)	36,458 (4,111)	116,629 (9,283)	19,405 (2,587)

<sup>17</sup> Johnson, J.E. (2005). Ruling Russia. *"Violence against Women in Russia."*pp. 149-156. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

<sup>18</sup> МВД- Министерство внутренних дел. The initial formation of the Ministry of Interior of the Russian Federation was in 1802; it existed under a different title during the Soviet era but maintained similar duties. It is largely responsible for the police (политция), the Main Directorate for Road Traffic Safety of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia (Главное управление по обеспечению безопасности дорожного движения МВД России) but is known more widely as GAI (ГАИ), and finally also the Internal Troops for the MVD RF (Внутренние войска Министерства внутренних дел) known as VV (ВВ). (<http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/world/russia/mvd-su0537.htm>)

1994	13,956 (12,818)	40,092 (5,127)	150,246 (15,282)	21,403 (2,995)
1995	12,515 (11,322)	38,645 (5,642)	152,395 (18,182)	21,100 (3,250)
<i>*Data</i>				
<i>above is from</i>				
<i>MVD 1996</i>				
1996	10,888 (10,006)	35,233 (5,281)	148,166 (18,951)	20,793 (3,090)
1997	9,307 (8,048)	30,840 (4,446)	101,587 (13,170)	20,866 (2,968)
1998	9,014 (7,695)	30,514 (4,555)	103,580 (13,130)	21,870 (3,176)
1999	8,346 (7,185)	31,151 (4,495)	100,828 (13,429)	23,248 (3,267)
2000	7,901 (6,688)	34,474 (4,753)	99,820 (13,049)	23,527 (3,357)
<b>2001</b>	<b>8,196 (NA)</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>

*Source:* Johnson Table 7.1, p 151 Ruling Russia<sup>19</sup>; MVD reports from 1996, 2001, and 2002. \*2002 only produced one statistic for the number of rapes in 2001

This table provides interesting numbers in the third column, Acts of Hooliganism by Men (against women), providing a small glance into the world of domestic violence since many of these cases were reported under hooliganism. It can possibly be thought that, even though the term domestic violence isn't directly stated in Russian crime

<sup>19</sup> In this data table provided in Johnson's chapter Violence against Women in Russia in the book Ruling Russia is meant to provide statistics looking only at the decrease of rape since the fall of the Soviet Union. She states that this official data may not even be statistically accurate due to underreporting. Johnson also admits that even this official data on rape holds little to no meaning and that it is even truer for domestic violence, where numbers don't even exist. (Johnson 2005)

statistics, domestic violence has increased since the fall of the Soviet Union, or perhaps it has become more transparent. Violence in general has increased in Russia during the past two decades and has remained a primarily masculine dominated area of crime. This notion can also coincide with the idea of the growth of domestic violence, since domestic violence has been regarded as a gender-based crime, especially in this case Russia, where the abusers tend to be men and victims female.

Women's crisis center movements in Russia have faced many difficult obstacles preventing them from receiving any type of government aid or assistance. One major reason, discussed further in this thesis, is that their plateau in growth in the mid-2000's may be due to the astounding number of victims they face with not nearly enough funding, assistance, or even help from Western NGO's. According to an article written by Zaripova in 2012, it has been estimated that approximately every 40 minutes a woman is killed in Russia at the hands of her lover or husband. This can be estimated to be roughly anywhere between 12,000 to 15,000 thousand women a year dying as a result of domestic violence. Compared to the United States, where the population is around 318 million people<sup>20</sup>, it is estimated that only around 3,000 women die each year due to domestic violence.<sup>21</sup> Russia's population currently stands at around 143 million people<sup>22</sup>, more than half that of the United States, but their domestic violence deaths are nearly five

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<sup>20</sup> United States Census Report as of 2014. [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov). Accessed February 2015.

<sup>21</sup> domesticabuseshelter.org. 2014. Domestic Abuse Shelter, Inc.

<sup>22</sup> <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>. Last reported 2013.



times as high.<sup>23</sup> In an article written by Bryntsyeva, she also discusses how it is estimated that nearly 36,000 women suffer from non-fatal beatings from their husbands yearly, with only 3% of these cases being reported or reaching court. Beyond that there is, of those 36,000 women, around 60-70% say they were too afraid to ask for help for fear of repercussions from their abuser or lack of faith and trust in the police and courts to actually help them.<sup>24</sup>

Just like in many countries, there are forms of patriarchal views that dominate Russian society which potentially play a vital part in the discourse involving victims of domestic violence. It has been estimated that around 78% of both men and women in Russia believe that the woman's role is bound to the home.<sup>25</sup> Because of this, many Russians truly believe that since domestic violence occurs at the home, it is then a private matter and not one for the state. Even as recent as 2008, there was a study that affirmed that many citizens believe that men still occupy the leading position in society and that they are also still considered to be the head of the family.<sup>26</sup> Not only do they maintain the "head of the household," but they also still control many leading positions in the working world, receive higher salaries than women, and many men even consider themselves the

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<sup>23</sup> Zaripova, A. (20 January 2012). *Разонравилась – убил*. Российская Газета. <http://www.rg.ru/2012/01/20/nasilie.html> (Disliked- Killed) All translations by me unless otherwise stated.

<sup>24</sup> Bryntsyeva, G. (23 October 2012) *Я бог, я царь. Я- am the Husband*. Российская Газета. <http://www.rg.ru/2012/10/23/nasilie.html> (I am God, I am King. I am Man)

<sup>25</sup> Parigina, N.A. (2009). *Общество и Проблемы Гендерного Насилия*. Вестник тогу No. 2 (13) Russia. Pp. 237-241

<sup>26</sup> Parigina, N. A. (2009). *Общество и Проблемы Гендерного Насилия*. Вестник тогу No. 2 (13) Russia. Pp. 237-243

leader in their relationships with women.<sup>27</sup> When gender inequality is prevalent in society, then it is logical that gender-based violence follows. In the Russian case however, it is difficult because even a large percentage of women believe that men have some right to use violence in certain scenarios, or believe that many acts of domestic violence were incited or provoked by women themselves.<sup>28</sup> When victim blaming comes strongly from both genders it can become more difficult for women to feel comfortable confiding with their friends or family about their violent situation for fear of being blamed or not believed, which only re-victimizes them. This can also potentially be a reason for their underreporting of violent incidents within the home, especially since a large portion of police and government officials are males. Victim blaming is not only present in Russia, but is widely present in the United States where there are instances of women being blamed for provoking violence unto themselves and further perpetuates the lack of trust by women in their law enforcement officials. As stated earlier, the United States has certain acts and statues in place to help on the prevention and prosecuting of domestic violence cases but even with these there are still many people who continue to blame the victim rather than to help and defend them.

Many articles and books that have been dedicated to the current epidemic of domestic violence in Russia all have one common goal of searching for a solution. These researchers and journalists, who have spent countless days conducting surveys, interviews, and analysis studies, all seem to be fixated on the solution being held in the

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid. pp. 238-242

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. pp. 237-240

passing of a law, which as proven by the United States, will not be the solution to the problem. In order to begin to eradicate the prevalence of domestic violence, lawmakers and advocates must look at the root of the problem, which manifests in many different forms. In Russia, one way that this problem is propagated with how Russians themselves view and discuss it. Media sources, in particular, continue to divert the public's opinion in a very misogynistic way.<sup>29</sup> If media outlets continue to place blame on the victim and write little about domestic violence and how it affects a large amount of the female population, then many women will begin to think, and eventually believe, that their victimization is entirely or in some way their fault. If one perceives the government and law enforcement officials are against you, as well as the press and media, there would be little to any reason to try to take on the system and press charges against your abuser.

When advocates and organizations provide ways of addressing domestic violence and how to preemptively prevent it, many of them resort to education based initiatives, which I will discuss in the following chapter of this thesis. If it is possible to educate children at a young age that violence of any sort is wrong then it will hopefully prevent a large portion of future violence. Others sometimes believe that there is a need to examine the mental health component to domestic violence and they advocate for better mental health facilities and care for those mentally disabled. As stated earlier, a majority of people believe that criminalization of all types of violence, especially towards women, and with the creation of a law, status or conduct code, will provide the basis for moving

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<sup>29</sup> Zabelina, T. (1994) December. Gender, Generation and Identity in Contemporary Russia. *“Sexual violence towards women.”*pp 169-172. New York, NY: Routledge

forward in prevention. However, any analysis of the problem requires an examination of how domestic violence is talked about both in research studies and in daily articles published in local newspapers. If a vast majority of articles continue to downplay the significance of domestic violence, then it will be more difficult for Russian citizens to fully grasp the ramifications of domestic violence in their culture.

Another way to examine a problem that a country is facing is to see how other countries are also talking about it. With countless women from the United States and the United Kingdom helping the women's crisis center movement in Russia, their experiences can be lessons learned in how the West views these issues Russian women are currently facing. Some may argue that it is always easier from the "outside looking in" to provide solutions and remedies for problems, but sometimes, especially in this case, Western solutions can prove not to be as helpful and can sometimes even deepen the problem. This idea is discussed further in Chapter 2. Western researchers and journalists have to learn how the Russian culture invariably differs in gender issues compared to Western countries. Their observations can potentially help lead to a clearer understanding and relationship between women of both cultures fighting for gender equality and protection from violence.

This thesis hopes to discuss how journalists and researchers in Russia have talked, written, and researched about the problem of domestic violence and compare it with how Westerners have had a similar dialogue. The focus will be on how the views of both Russian scholars and journalists can provide a broader array of analysis and solutions than sources on the subject.

## 2. Between the East and the West

There are a number of Western scholars who have taken an interest in women's movements in Russia after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. Many of them are women themselves, and indeed almost all of the research done for this chapter has been provided by primarily women. Some of the scholars examined are Janet Elise Johnson, who is one of the leading writers involving women, feminism, and gender in contemporary Russia. Others include Lynne Attwood, Hilary Pilkington, Rebecca Kay, Jean Robinson, and Peter Solomon. There is also a deeper look at two Russian scholars, Nadezhda Azhgikhina and Tatiana Zabelina, who were mentioned in the previous chapter. They have written works that were largely aimed at a Western audience. Most of these scholars had the opportunity to go to Russia first hand and to interview Russian women who were working in these crisis centers, or other movements, that sought out guidance and financial aid to continue their work. One of the most important notions that comes from these works is that "critiquing non-Western societies is rife with analytical risks of universalizing Western experience and objectifying Other women as victims."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Johnson, J.E. (2007). Living Gender After Communism. Contesting Violence Contesting Gender: *Crisis Centers Encountering Local Government in Barnaul, Russia*. P. 42. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. In this section of her chapter, Johnson uses this quote from another writer of this book, Azra Hromadzic, who also compared Westerners to Alice in Wonderland because of how they can sometimes misinterpret views in Central and Eastern Europe.

One of the major topics of discussion is this idea of 'feminism' and how this word has been almost like a stigma to some women's organizations.<sup>2</sup> Many Russian women who worked with these organizations found it difficult to conform to a Western style of feminism, but there was a more Russian centric version of feminism that many of them began to adopt.<sup>3</sup> This Russian feminism relied heavily on the idea of individual rights and how women had every right to pursue a better life.<sup>4</sup> The downside to the rejection of Western feminism is that many rural women's crisis centers and organizations are unable to be funded due to the Western NGO's requiring an adoption of a feministic approach.<sup>5</sup> Although many of these organizations are sympathetic towards feminist ideology, many are afraid to adopt it completely fearing that their main goal of helping women victims of violence may get lost or that there will be community backlash, especially from the men.<sup>6</sup>

Westerner scholars have also taken to referring to these women's organizations as the women's crisis center movement, rather than women's rights movement, because

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<sup>2</sup> Kay, R. (2004). Post-Soviet Women Encountering Transition: Nation Building, Economic Survival, and Civic Activism. *Meeting the Challenge Together? Russian Grassroots Women's Organizations and the Shortcomings of Western Aid.* P. 244. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press. Kay states that "the pursuit of gender equality per se was often perceived as irrelevant or inappropriate, whereas 'feminism' was viewed by many either as a concept alien to their culture and experience or as a theoretical pursuit for privileged (Western) women enjoying the luxury of spare time, financial security, and material comfort."

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. pp. 244-246

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 244

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. pp. 249-250

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 245

they are not officially considered to be a rights movement.<sup>7</sup> Women's crisis center movement seems more fitting for what these women are trying attain in reality. Many of them are not looking for the government to fix the wage gap between men and women, or to even provide them with more management positions. What these women want is resources to aid them in helping these battered women who reach out to them in dire stress. It has become nearly impossible for some provincial women to continue these shelters or organizations, according to Rebecca Kay, for financial reasons and emotional reasons. Without the money, many of these women use their own homes and telephone lines to provide a place of shelter or a number to call for advice or for help. These women become so emotionally worn down, that after months they have to suspend their services because of the toll it has taken on them.<sup>8</sup> Overall many of these women from the United States and the United Kingdom look at the progression of women's organizations and why they have not been successful or what can be done to help them gain more support and national awareness.

## **2.1 Intro to the Russian Context**

*"Russian Women Love to Be Martyrs, They Love to be Beaten"*<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Attwood, L. (1997).

<sup>8</sup> Kay, R. (2004). Post-Soviet Women Encountering Transition: Nation Building, Economic Survival, and Civic Activism. *"Meeting the Challenge Together? Russian Grassroots Women's Organizations and the Shortcomings of Western Aid."* P. 247-259. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press

<sup>9</sup> Johnson, J.E. (2007). Living Gender after Communism. Contesting Violence Contesting Gender: *"Crisis Centers Encountering Local Government in Barnaul, Russia."*p. 46. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. As stated to her by the head of the educational committee.

Janet Elise Johnson has published many articles and books that have discussed the relation of gender and violence in Russia and how Western approaches have been both helpful and worthless. In Chapter Two of her book, *Living Gender after Communism*, although her data comes from Barnaul, Russia, she discusses the broader problem of domestic violence and lack of shelters in the entirety of Russia. She immediately throws out facts from a 2001-2002 survey conducted by Tatiana Zabelina that says that over 87% of men and 93% of women in Russia, agreed that violence against women in the family is a problem.<sup>10</sup> This wording here is interesting because it doesn't say that men and women agree that violence against women is a problem, but that violence against *women in the family* is a problem. Wording it in a way such as that seemingly excludes women victims of abuse who are not married. Johnson also goes on to say that she feels that, from her "feminist perspective,"<sup>11</sup> in order to have domestic violence taken seriously in Russia, men have to be held responsible for the violence they inflict on women, and women should have no fault at all. Many radical feminists take this belief to the extreme, causing a lot of backlash in today's society and weakening the aim of feminism, but Johnson's writing does not reflect animosity towards men, rather she provides a fact-based opinion that women are more often than not the victims, so naturally men are the cause of violence.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid p. 40.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid p. 42.



Another reason why domestic violence had long been swept under the rug was the inability of law enforcement officials to comprehend the violence against women because they always seemed to resort to victim blaming or underreporting of the severity of the violence. This skepticism or lack of intervention from law enforcement showed that many of them still believed that domestic violence was a “privatized”<sup>12</sup> matter that should be handled at home and not by the state. But even with these beliefs still permeating Russian society, there was still a small surge of crisis centers being created in the mid-1990’s all the way through 2001. By the summer of 2002, there was estimated to be close to 120 crisis centers or organizations that were participants in opposition of violence against women.<sup>13</sup> The last known figure for women’s centers in Russia was published in 2009<sup>14</sup> when figures were guessed to be about 121 organizations throughout Russia between 2001 and 2004, but Johnson guesses that these numbers are generous and that more conservative numbers would estimate around 47. It has been approximately 6 years since that publication and an additional 11 years since those numbers were determined, which is disconcerting when it is realized that every year or two there is a domestic violence shelter consensus done in the United States.<sup>15</sup> These crisis centers in Russia have taken on a very specific model as Johnson states:

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p 43-44.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid p. 44.

<sup>14</sup> Johnson, J.E.(2009) Gender Violence in Russia: The Politics of Feminist Intervention. Pp. 50-52. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

<sup>15</sup> <http://nnedv.org/resources/census.html>.

The Russian version of the crisis center is an organization led by a few individuals (typically professionals receiving some compensation), a hotline staffed by volunteer counselors for several hours a day several days of the week, often some in-person counseling or support groups, and usually some sort of broader advocacy work.<sup>16</sup>

These centers were admirable because essentially it seemed logistically inexpensive.

They rarely provided women an actual place where they could find shelter from their abusive partners, whereas in the United States, many of these centers have some access to a safe place for women to go.<sup>17</sup> Russian crisis centers were only able to provide emotional support through their established hotlines, and at times if they can convince lawyers to provide free services, they may have been able to help them with legal assistance in severe cases.<sup>18</sup>

There were a variety of obstacles that these crisis centers faces in Russia, and besides financial stability, politics played a large part in their success and whether or not government officials took them seriously. Women leaders of these organizations had to make tough decisions that would help secure the legitimacy of their organization, and though they were interested in Western feminist ideology, they ultimately made changes to accommodate their cultural landscape. For example, they deemed it very important and crucial to their mission to create new terms in relation to “domestic violence” and “violence against women”. Ultimately they decided on using “violence in the family” because they felt that it brought to light the affects abusing women has on the entire

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<sup>16</sup> Johnson, J.E. (2009) *Gender Violence in Russia: The Politics of Feminist Intervention*. P. 52. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid p. 52

<sup>18</sup> Ibid p. 52-53

family structure and values, which are highly regarded in Russian culture.<sup>19</sup> This terminological change was a smart move for the organizations and crisis centers because it allowed them to have a broader range of topics to use to educate the public, including police officers and medical professionals, on why violence in the family is a problem that can be prevented.

By this new term, violence in the family had to be redefined, and was by an organization called Otklik. They approached the term in a gender neutral way and use wording to show that anyone in the family can be a victim of domestic violence. They define it as follows:

any deliberate action of one member of the family against another, if that action restrains the constitutional rights and freedoms of a member of the family as a citizen, causes him physical pain and brings harm or issues threats of harm to the physical or individual development of the minor members (children) of the family. International rights regimes distinguish between the following forms of violence in the family: physical violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, and economic violence. The object of domestic violence can be any member of the family.<sup>20</sup>

This definition is, according to Johnson is supportive of this organizations mission of achieving gender equality. She also states that their framework has taken on a more sociological standpoint, rather than a radical feminist framework. Johnson attributes this to many of the staff being sociological students and faculty and that there is a lack of radical feminism taught in Russian sociology courses.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Johnson, J.E. (2007) pp. 44-45

<sup>20</sup> Johnson, J.E. (2007). P. 48

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p. 48

Most of Johnson's critiques focus on the formation and structures of these crisis centers and organizations and how they can improve. As stated earlier though, these works were released in 2007 and 2009, but more recently Johnson has written an article just rearticulating this same notions but under the new masculine regime of Putin.<sup>22</sup> She actually provides a basic framework for other Western scholars on what to talk about when discussing domestic violence in Russia. Focus thus far from a Western standpoint, has been purely based around the implementation of women's movements, or in Russia, the establishment of crisis centers and organizations to aid victims of domestic violence.

## **2.2 Women's Crisis Centers in Russia**

*"The Point Is, It Is Not Even About a Struggle for Change, It Is About Survival"*<sup>23</sup>

Being that Russia is the largest country in the world, it can be deduced that there would be issues in widespread establishments of women's crisis centers and organizations. With a majority of the population living in cities<sup>24</sup> it can be difficult for women living in rural areas of Russia to find help in dealing with their abusive relationships. On the flip-side of that, it is also difficult for those women who decide to try to establish hotlines or shelters, with hardly any volunteers and essentially little to no

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<sup>22</sup> Johnson, J. E. & Saarinen, A. "Twenty-first Century Feminisms Under Repression: Gender Regime Change and the Women's Crisis Center Movement in Russia." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 38.3, Spring: 543-67. (Books and Publications: Peer Reviewed Article) 2013

<sup>23</sup> Kay, R.(2004). Pp. 243

<sup>24</sup> <http://russiapedia.rt.com/basic-facts-about-russia/population/>

funding. These grassroots women's organizations, according to Rebecca Kay, have little to no chance of long term survival because of the lack of recognition or support from outside NGO's, especially from Western countries.<sup>25</sup> In regards to their city counterparts, these organizations and centers had no headquarters or premise, no payroll for staff and hardly any equipment that these types of centers usually require.<sup>26</sup> It is easy to foresee why many of these shelters last for barely several months, with few exceptions a few years. Their competition, for funding from NGO's, with shelters and organizations in highly populated cities, such as Moscow and St. Petersburg, is without question highly imbalanced, making their applications for funding redundant. Many of the established centers in Moscow and St. Petersburg become suspicious of these small, provincial organizations that pop up and also vie for this abundance of funding and other services provided by these Western NGO's.<sup>27</sup>

These rural organizations are pitted against women who run these large city crisis centers and organizations. Besides having a larger amount of victims pass through their shelter, they also are run by women who have better educations and working knowledge of the English language. Education aside, their knowledge of the English language is one of the main reasons why they beat out any small town organization for funding from these NGO's. Like any type of funding or grant money, there is a required application, and within the application the NGO's provide key wording or goals that they are looking

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<sup>25</sup> Kay, R. (2004). P. 247

<sup>26</sup> Kay, R. (2004) p. 247

<sup>27</sup> Kay, R. (2004)

for in organizations to fund.<sup>28</sup> Kay discusses how these Western NGO's are appealing to many of these centers because of the "lucrative source of funding":

These foundations and aid organizations-usually operating either directly or indirectly on public funds allocated to them by Western government bodies for redistribution to indigenous organizations and charities- have offered numerous rounds of funding to Russian NGOs through project grants awarded after a competitive application procedure. For organizations that secured such grants, generous funding often facilitated the acquisition of office equipment, including computers, facsimile machines, and photocopiers, as well as paying the rent on premises and staff salaries for a limited period. Clearly, such prospects are attractive to many Russian organizations.<sup>29</sup>

This attraction unfortunately only appeared to have further separated women's organizations out of jealousy, respite, and from being suspicious of each other's motives. Western funding seemed to have only deepened the problem for these women, rather than provide additional resources to help. Kay also takes part in blaming these Western NGOs for not doing their due diligence of researching the "cultural and social contexts" in which these NGOs would be working, which caused many problems in dispersing funds and causing a lack of trust between the Western and Russian partners.<sup>30</sup>

Additional problems smaller grassroot organizations faced, was their resistance to conform to Western standards and ideologies. Their apprehension on calling themselves a "feminist organization" led to a lot of their organizations to not be considered for NGO funding. Many of them felt they were back to the Soviet-style form of forced emancipation of women, which really only perpetuated their oppression, but this time it

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid p. 249

<sup>29</sup>Kay, R. (2004) p 249

<sup>30</sup> Kay, R. (2004) p. 250

came with a new term of “feminism.”<sup>31</sup> These women, though considered to have less of an education than their city counterparts, were smart in respects to understanding the consequences that foreign funding would have in their village or provincial areas. They would rather have let their organizations fail from lack of funding, which may have potentially kept their operations running, than to be considered a puppet for Western ideologies, which many post-Soviet people still opposed. Even though the vast majority of the population doesn’t understand how NGO funding works, or even what an NGO is, their distrust still runs deep.<sup>32</sup>

Besides these centers internal problems, they also face problems with the victims that use their services. Lynne Attwood discusses how in order to empower these crisis centers there must be “a change in the way it is represented in the media.” Relating back to the Russian writings on domestic violence, it is important to remember that many of these journalists are still experiencing regulation and censorship even though they’ve supposedly gained independence from self-regulation at the fall of the Soviet Union.<sup>33</sup> It is also difficult to expect a sudden upheaval of societal norms by having one or two journalists suddenly write about the horrible consequences of rape and violence against women. Many women in these organizations however, attempt to persuade journalists

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid pp. 251-253

<sup>32</sup> Ibid pp. 257-258

<sup>33</sup> Zabelina, T. (1996) p. 171

and other media workers to help them print the truths behind violence against women and how this affects a majority of Russian women.<sup>34</sup>

One of their main goals in gaining support in the mainstream media is to help dispel the myths of domestic violence that are spread throughout society. According to Marina Pisklakova-Parker, many of the people she has encountered believe that domestic violence is only happening to women who live in poverty or have partners who abuse alcohol. But the reality is that domestic violence does not discriminate against class lines or educational backgrounds, in fact most victims are living in what could be considered middle-class homes and work as full-time mothers or housewives.<sup>35</sup> Pisklakova-Parker also discusses how situations of growing domestic violence is not helped by the Russian women's inherent need to self-sacrifice for her family and that women are trained in childhood to be ready to serve a man, which may mean being abused by them.<sup>36</sup>

Attwood is the first one to attempt to provide alternative solutions to the crisis center and organizations aspect. If there are programs established that help educate children, and even young adults, that violence against women is unacceptable and to help prevent it by reporting it if they witness it. She also suggests that there should be a number of hostels or homes set up, separate from crisis center locations, to help battered women be able to leave their abuser, because if there is nowhere for them to go then they cannot justify leaving their relationship. These hostels and homes should also be prepared

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<sup>34</sup> Attwood,L. (1997) pp 110-111

<sup>35</sup> Ibid p. 111

<sup>36</sup> Ibid p. 111



to be able to accommodate children of these women also, because most of them also fear for the safety of their children.<sup>37</sup> Attwood also addresses how Russian literature treats and views domestic violence, and how even though they distinguish between rape and domestic violence as being two separate phenomena, though marital rape is a very real thing that happens in abusive relationships, that these writings still have the propensity to blame the women's behavior and roles in the situations that lead to the attacks.<sup>38</sup> Suggestions have been made that if men are treated better and do not feel socially inferior to women that they would be less inclined to attack.

Yet the mainstream Russian literature, a strict dichotomy between strong, active' men, and 'weak, passive' women is advanced as a possible solution to the problem. If men's superior status and strength were given more recognition, the argument goes, they would be more inclined to protect women instead of raping and battering them. Rape and domestic violence are both being used as an excuse for promoting a stricter gender dichotomy, a means for bolstering the patriarchal order which has always been so central to Soviet and, now, post-Soviet Russia.<sup>39</sup>

Again there is a return to the financial component of any of these programs or educational classes that want to be offered. In order to continue to produce pamphlets, and other literature on prevention of domestic violence and to staff well-operated crisis centers, hostels, and homes for these battered women, there must be a line of funding that is continually pumped into their organizations. But with limited government funding available and Western NGOs unable to provide for every organization that tries to sustain

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid p. 112

<sup>38</sup> Ibid pp 112-113

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. p 113

itself in Russia, these women workers wait for the public to recognize how large their problem of domestic violence, rape, and overall violations of women's rights is in their current society.<sup>40</sup>

### **2.3 How the West Works: Domestic Violence in the US**

It can be easy for Westerners to go into a struggling country, such as Russia, and to claim having the authority on social issues that have been supposedly addressed in their own countries. Although there were plenty of women's crisis centers and various other organizations created in the United States during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, it was not until 1994 that any law was introduced nationwide to address the problem of domestic violence and to provide punishments for abusers.<sup>41</sup> The major difference between the United States and Russia though, was that there were large civil rights movement's years before the fall of the Soviet Union. Therefore, it may be wiser for new Western critics to go into Russia and view the current women's crisis center movement as in its early stages and to allow these new centers time to develop into what the United States has now. Instead it is easier to blame the post-Soviet society and their economic turmoil on failures of these centers, rather than recognizing that they are going through the same political backlash that women's movements went through in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and continue to go through today.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid p 113

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.icadvinc.org/what-is-domestic-violence/history-of-battered-womens-movement/>

Another contrasting difference is how women's shelters are treated in the U.S. As of 2015 there are an estimated 1,900 shelters in the United States<sup>42</sup>, all of them somehow related to helping battered women, or providing other resources to help victims of domestic violence. Many shelters that are associated with the prevention of domestic violence are funded by different state grants that are provided from the federal government. It is easy for them to apply each year to continue receiving funding to help staff these shelters, and provide services such as hotlines and create literature and pamphlets to be distributed in the area pertaining to the shelter. Many of the new technologies also make it easier for women victims to contact or research these shelters without fear of repercussions from their abuser. It is easy to make the number dialed appear generic or for the websites to provide easy exits and erase your history of ever visiting their sites. Women shelters are also kept private, the addresses never being published to the public, therefore preventing the abusers the ability to find their wife or children should she decide to finally leave him and seek protection.

These shelters have advanced largely in the past 20 to 25 years and continue today to grow and receive funding through government grants and private donors. But even with these shelters in place, and an acting law just recently reauthorized in 2014 by Vice President Joe Biden,<sup>43</sup> there is still widespread domestic violence happening every day in the United States. An estimated 3 women are killed daily in the United States as a result

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<sup>42</sup> [http://nnedv.org/downloads/Census/DVCounts2013/DVCounts13\\_NatlSummary.pdf](http://nnedv.org/downloads/Census/DVCounts2013/DVCounts13_NatlSummary.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> S. 47 (113th): Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013. January 22, 2013. 113<sup>th</sup> Congress.

of actions of domestic violence, and since 2003 a total of 18,000 women have been killed by men in domestic violence disputes, as of 2014. Another 1 in 4 women are expected to be victims of some form of domestic violence in their lifetime in the United States. It is also more likely for women of color to be abused in their relationships at rates 35% higher than white women in the United States.<sup>44</sup>

Even more recently there have been TV ads and commercials of celebrities or other famous people coming forward to discuss domestic violence. The NO MORE campaign was launched to help the prevention of domestic violence and sexual assault and began in 2009.<sup>45</sup> There are ways for citizens to pledge money or other donations towards their movement, which provides to shelters nationally. They created dozens of TV ads using currently popular TV actors to address how widespread domestic violence is and how it affects nearly everyone. Another recent dispute was in the National Football League (NFL) with various professional football players being charged with domestic violence against their wives and girlfriends. The famous case was that of Ray Rice, where there was video evidence of the assault, but his wife came forward and took blame for what had occurred. The public was not convinced however, and the NFL began releasing statements of acts and initiatives that they were going to take part in that promotes the prevention of domestic violence.<sup>46</sup> They even went as far as to air a domestic violence ad

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<sup>44</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/23/domestic-violence-statistics\\_n\\_5959776.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/23/domestic-violence-statistics_n_5959776.html)

<sup>45</sup> <http://nomore.org/about/>

<sup>46</sup> <http://deadspin.com/do-the-nfls-anti-domestic-violence-initiatives-actually-1682681513>

during the Superbowl in 2015, where commercial timeslots are worth millions of dollars.<sup>47</sup>

These are just a few examples of many problems that's still occur in the United States on a daily basis. It is with these facts and figures that it may prove difficult for Russian women to trust Western women with their methods since domestic violence is still an epidemic in the United States, though maybe not to the extent it is in Russia.

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<sup>47</sup> <http://abcnews.go.com/Sports/super-bowl-2015-nfl-air-domestic-violence-psa/story?id=28648175>

## Russian Journalistic and Academic Views

In today's world there exists a large divide between journalism and science & academia, however both parties strive towards a common goal of informing their respective public. This divide, especially in Russia, can at times skew their so-called "common goal" due to the fact that many media outlets are still controlled by the Russian government.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, the journalistic and mass media's idea of an informed public can be drastically different than the informed public that scientists, researchers, and academic scholars seek. Dealing with a topic such as domestic violence, known as *насилие в семье* (*nasilie v semye*), or sometimes in Russian literature they use the term violence towards women which is *насилие в отношении женщин* (*nasilie v otnoshenii zhenshiin*), the organizations that advocate against this violence rely heavily on media output. They do this in hopes of receiving national and international attention, informing the public so that those who are suffering from these acts of violence know that there is help available, and in hopes of receiving funding for their shelters, hotlines, and other various resources.<sup>49</sup> It is then important to understand how journalists, researchers, and academic scholars alike discuss the factors of domestic violence and violence towards women and how their findings and publications affect not only society's attitude towards these acts of violence, but also the perpetrators and victims of these crimes as well.

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<sup>48</sup> Khvostunova, O. & Voinova, E. (2009). Perspectives to the Media in Russia: "Western" Interests and Russian Developments. *Media Changes in Russia: Threats, Challenges and Prospects.* pp. 187-197. Finland: Gummerus Printing.

<sup>49</sup> Arutunyan, A. & West, J. (2014) 29 May. "State Duma to Introduce Russia's First Domestic Violence Bill." Printed in The Moscow News. Moscow, Russia. Accessed on 19 Nov. 2014

*Domestic Violence* is a term that has encompassed a broad variety of behaviors and actions in a relationship where one partner holds dominance or power over the other.

The Domestic Violence Organization<sup>50</sup> defines domestic violence as follows:

Domestic violence and emotional abuse are behaviors used by one person in a relationship to control the other. Partners may be married or not married; heterosexual, gay, or lesbian; living together, separated or dating

This website also goes on to provide examples of abuse such as sexual assault, intimidation, and actual or threatened physical harm. In order for the violence to be considered a criminal offence there must be actual evidence of physical assault, sexual abuse, or stalker. But, as this website also states, there are various other forms of domestic violence that can manifest in psychological, emotional, or even economic abuse and although these acts may not be considered criminal behavior they can sometimes be gateways to manifestations of physical violence. This study focuses solely on the information involved women as the primary victims of domestic violence, but as stated in the introduction, men can also become victims of domestic violence. A brief aside, there is also evidence that shows male victims coming forward are even scarcer than women victims coming forward and seeking help due to even more skepticism from law officials and for the fear of being emasculated.<sup>51</sup> In Russia there is also no official documentation or law that concretely defines domestic violence and all the caveats it entails, however,

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<sup>50</sup> (2009). "Definition- Domestic Violence." Creative Communication Groups. Accessed on Web 22 Nov 2014.

<sup>51</sup> Robinson, L. & Segak, J. (2014). Help for Abused Men: *Escaping Domestic Violence by Women or Domestic Partners*. Helpguide: online. Accessed 15 Nov. 2014.

there are laws in the Russian codex that do define certain instances of violence and what potential sentencing the offenders can receive. Even in light of these laws, many of the Russian women's crisis center movements have adopted Western definitions and understandings to help shape and understand a problem that has been a fixture in Russian culture and society.<sup>52</sup>

In order to properly grasp the inevitable stagnation or even slowing of the women's crisis center movement in the new post-Soviet Russia, it is important to understand that this movement swept through in the mid-1990's, a time when Russia was undergoing dramatic changes to its government, economy, and social structures and institutions, including: the Chechen War that lasted from 1994 up and until 2009 and even the Russian Financial Crisis of 1998 ("The Ruble Crisis"),<sup>53</sup> there was little attention provided to the needs of its citizens in a capacity of providing proper civil and political rights.<sup>54</sup> With this in mind, it might be easier to understand why the Russian government did not immediately help or recognize this women's crisis center movement, nor provide them with state funding or other services they required. But, even with these obstacles, the women who were behind this movement, pushed for a law to be enacted

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<sup>52</sup> Johnson, J. E. *Gender Violence in Russia: The Politics of Feminist Intervention*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

<sup>53</sup> Schleifer, A. & Treisman, D. (2005). "A Normal Country: Russia After Communism." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* Vol. 19, No. 1. Pp. 151-174.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 151-174



that would help define domestic violence and put sanctions in place for offenders.<sup>55</sup> The law that was drafted in 1996<sup>56</sup> and failed to pass the State Duma (*Государственная дума*), which is the lower house of the Federal Assembly of Russia (*Федеральное Собрание*). A new проект, or in English: a project, was struck up, according to the article just cited, in May of 2013 and was presented to the State Duma. The law was introduced by Saliya Murzabayeva, a member of the State Duma Healthcare Committee, who said “the bill stipulates judicial and non-judicial measures to protect domestic violence victims from repeat violence and prevent the culprits from searching out their victims and from harassing, visiting or phoning them”<sup>57</sup>

Although this law would have been considered a major milestone, according to Marina Pisklakova-Parker, the director of ANNA House,<sup>58</sup> it was unable to gain enough support to be passed by the State Duma. Hence, even now in 2015 there is still a strong need and effort in Russia to have a law passed that would effectively define domestic violence according to their criminal codes and also be able to provide applicable punishments to the offenders and retributive services for the victims.

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<sup>55</sup> Johnson, J. E. *Gender Violence in Russia: The Politics of Feminist Intervention*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. Pp. 42-68

<sup>56</sup> Arutunyan, A. & West, J. (2014) 29 May. “*State Duma to Introduce Russia’s First Domestic Violence Bill.*” Printed in *The Moscow News*. Moscow, Russia. Accessed by wed on 19 Nov. 2014

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>58</sup> ANNA house is located in Moscow Russia and it is the national center for the prevention of domestic violence in Russia.

### 3.1 “If He Beats You”

One of the most successful ‘victories’ of *perestroika* for the Russian media was the idea of press freedom according to Zabelina She states that “media also shapes public opinion in a misogynistic way. Even overt sexual discrimination is hushed up and many journalists and publishers choose to interpret press freedom – the most important victory of *perestroika*- as total freedom from any kind of self-regulation”<sup>59</sup> She also talks about how because of this problem in media, Russian society is flooded with old-fashioned stereotypical images of women beholden to their wifely, motherly and homely duties. These images can also range anywhere from mocking women and their consistent ‘victim’ status to blaming them as provokers of the violence that is inflicted upon them. While the media continues to perpetuated women-blaming for major problems in society such as the AIDs epidemic or even divorce. At the same time the manage to capitalize on sexualizing women, thus making them appear as second-class citizens, whose only value is of sexual worth.<sup>60</sup> Another example is an old Russian saying that “if he beats you, then he loves you” not only reinforcing for Russian men that beating your wife is okay and actually a sign of affection, but it also deceives the women into thinking that abuse is crucial to the success of a loving relationship. This seems to only support the claim that domestic violence is not a simple issue<sup>61</sup> and that the lack of information available to these journalists may shed some light as to why there are very few publications in

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<sup>59</sup> Zabelina, T. (1996) p 171

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. p 169-171

<sup>61</sup> Thomas (2008)

newspapers or magazines that discuss domestic violence or call for society to move to action on behalf the victims of domestic violence.

In an article entitled “Я бог, я царь. Я- муж”<sup>62</sup> published in *Rosiiskaya Gazeta* (*Российская Газета*) the author, Galina Brintsyeva<sup>63</sup> provides the public with a few statistics surrounding domestic violence and concludes her article with the sounding need for a law that would help put an end to most violent crimes involving women and families. This theme of a ‘supposed’ law being the holy grail, a law that would clearly define domestic violence and have its own repercussions separate of those currently in the codex, of solutions in helping to end and potentially prevent domestic violence that runs rampant throughout many articles published in newspapers. Brintsyeva (2012), is just the first of many examples of Russian journalists who are looking for a quick solution to a problem that has lasted throughout Russia for well over one hundred years. Although some of the facts she provides are eye-opening and would be alarming to an average person, they are not enough to jar the conservative Russian society that what is happening is not okay. One of her main argument is that in over 89 countries there exists some form of law that criminalizes domestic violence and provides repercussions for offenders. For example, in Moldova, since the enactment of a similar law, their reports of domestic violence cases has decreased over 30% (2012), as well as in Ukraine, the number of murders and violent crimes that happened in families decreased by 20%

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<sup>62</sup> “I am God, I am King. I – am the Husband.”

<sup>63</sup> Brintsyeva, G. (2012) 23 October.

(2012). But in the grand scheme, the law will only provide partial relief to a problem that goes way deeper than a criminal code. Brintsyeva is able to provide figures, which were provided by the ANNA center (a domestic violence shelter located in Moscow), such as the fact that 36,000 women admit that they suffer from beatings from their husbands, 12-14 thousand women are killed every year in Russia by their partners, and that 60-70% of women do not ask for help<sup>64</sup>. If those two figures are taken together than anywhere upwards of 25,000 of those women will not seek help or shelter from their abuser and nearly half of those women will die at the hands of their abusers. The one upside to journalism in comparison to scientific research is their ability to include real life anecdotes or colloquial sayings that a society uses in regards to different situations.

The very same newspaper published a similar article that same week on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2012, entitled “Разонравилась – убил”<sup>65</sup> writer Adilya Zaripova tries to provide some information of possible resources for women to use who find themselves in abusive relationships. She immediately begins her article with a subheading reading: Ежегодно в России больше 10 тысяч женщин погибают от рук партнеров.<sup>66</sup> With this statement she draws to attention the fact that that number, if broken into a daily figure, estimates that nearly 28 women die each day in Russia due to some form of domestic violence. Rather than address the actual problem itself, Zaripova (2012) provides the reader with information regarding resources available to women who find themselves in violent

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<sup>64</sup> All statistics are taken from Brintsyeva’s article “Я бог, я царь. Я- муж”

<sup>65</sup> “Not attracted to you anymore, so I killed you”

<sup>66</sup> “Annually in Russia more than 10,000 women die at the hands of their partners.”

relationships. Discussion about the “Anna Center” is the focal point of her article, with quotes from the director and founder of Anna Center, Marina Pisklakova-Parker. The Center was founded in 1993 in Moscow, the capital of Russia, and has since been fighting for the rights of women and for government assistance in aiding these women and children who are fleeing from a violent home. Marina Pisklakova-Parker has also helped establish a variety of other resources, such as hotlines for women to call. With the help of Pisklakova-Parker, Zaripova is able to remind her Russian audience, all of whom are most likely women and possibly women in this very situation, that there is help available and that they are not responsible nor do they deserve to be abused in any capacity.

Zaripova’s (2012) article also provides the truth behind a stereotype that has long been perpetuated as correct, though dispelled by researchers in this area, that women who are in abusive relationships are usually lowly housewives who have little to no education. This, however, according to Pisklakova-Parker is false after data in 2012 showed that over 55% of the phone calls into the help hotline were made by women with secondary education and even many had well-paying jobs. Pisklakova-Parker also mentions that more than 50% of women across Russia, regardless of social class, have admitted to having endured physical violence anywhere from 3 to 7 years<sup>67</sup>. But Zaripova and Pisklakova-Parker’s recent findings in regards to the reasoning behind why women stay in these abusive relationships seem to echo the same words mentioned early that Zabelina

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<sup>67</sup> All statistics are taken from Zaripova’s article “Разонравилась – убил”, which were provided by ANNA center.

provided in 1994. As Zabelina had mentioned, many women were blamed in the press and media for issues that plagued Russia, so that they are now reminded daily that they are the reason for all that is wrong in the world and in their life. Quite a few Russian women claim to remain in these relationships with their abuser because of aspects such as: having children together, living in the same house, being dependent upon their partner for financial support and/or having no control over her own finances, fear that their abuser will only become angrier and possibly kill them or their children, and also because they fear, that since their partner has isolated them from family and friends, that they will not be able to find support from anyone, be it family, friends, government, or even society, according to data provided by the ANNA center. Also, a general opinion held by many Russian women is that if a women leaves an abusive relationship they in turn destroy their family. So it is to be understood that many Russian women believe that is better for their own individual suffering that to put their entire family through pain by divorcing or leaving their abuser. Zaripova, however, concludes her article in the same resounding idea and tone that Brintsyeva by stating that a law is need and required in order to begin to even think about aiding victims and preventing future instances of domestic violence.

Pavel Zygmantovich, a family psychologist who has written and been interviewed for many newspapers, radio stations, and television shows published his article on his website entitled “*Как любить долго и счастливо*”<sup>68</sup> in July of 2014. Zygmantovich

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<sup>68</sup> “How to Love Long and Be Happy.”

(2014) wrote these piece in response to a letter he received from a woman who was not sure if she was experiencing violence or if she was just overreacting. The article was entitled “Психологическое насилие: враг, который не замечен”<sup>69</sup> Unlike Zaripova and Brintsyeva, Zygmanovich (2014) takes on the idea of domestic violence from the perspective of a psychologist and rather than to provide resources, he decides to provide his readers with indications of psychological violence that will potentially lead to physical violence and what to do in these situations. He starts off his article with an ultimatum stating that “Надо запомнить раз и навсегда, всем и каждому — насилие в браке и семье недопустимо.”<sup>70</sup> Unlike the other two journalists, Zygmanovich<sup>71</sup> provides a resolute stance on the issue of domestic violence and does not depend or hide behind the lack of law for feeling the way he does about this situation. He understands the inherent rights that each human being has, regardless of gender or class in society. Returning to his article, his main intention is to provide his audience with a proper understanding of where psychological violence can manifest into something more, such as physical violence. Prior to delving into these manifestations he acknowledges that there are different classifications of psychological violence, but his information is not in regards of these classifications but rather the precursors to these violent acts. First manifestation is rejection, such as saying “I don’t want you” or “I don’t need you.”

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<sup>69</sup> “Psychological Violence: The Unnoticed Foe”

<sup>70</sup> “We must remember this once and for all, everyone- violence in marriage and in the family is never acceptable.”

<sup>71</sup> Зыгмантович, П. (2013, October 15). Психологическое насилие: враг, который не замечен. Retrieved December 1, 20154, from <http://zygmantovich.com/?p=6132>

Second manifestation is depreciation of their partner's contribution to the relationship or marriage, such as constantly ridiculing them for being unemployed or telling them that they are useless. The third manifestation is insults or humiliation, which can be towards a person's physical, emotional, or mental state. These insults can be done either in the privacy of the home or in a public setting both causing trauma to the victim. The fourth and final manifestation is reproach. Zygmantovich states that reproach can be in a variety of forms but it is also somehow degrading and condescending to the victim. These examples can be anything such as "This soup is good but it will never be as good as my mothers" or "You're just like your mother." These passive aggressive reproaches can also fall under the manifestation of humiliation if it's known, for example, that the reproach is specifically malicious towards the victim.

Zygmantovich rightfully concludes his article with what he suggests one does when they find themselves in these instances of psychological violence or abuse. He states simply that you must run or escape from this poisonous relationship. In fact he states that if there is violence such as this present then it is not a relationship because it lacks the foundations of respect and love that relationships and marriage require. He follows up his statement insisting on victims fleeing from their abuse with other alternatives, such as reading self-help books or seeing a therapist to help get the victim through the traumatic events. These, he says, will not work though if you first don't remove yourself from the situation causing the trauma or violence. His article is drastically different than the first two discussed thus far in that he focuses more on how to detect these problems and what he suggests doing rather than spouting facts and



figures of how many women in Russia are suffering from domestic violence. One surprising difference is that he, as a male, addresses the fact that victims can be either male or female, whereas Zaripova and Brintsyeva, both females, provide these facts relating specifically to female victims. He also makes no mention of any need for a law or government intervention, he places all of the resolutions to the problem in the individual, which to some degree may be helpful.

The final article published in the Russian edition of *Glamour Magazine*, was recently published on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014 and it is dedicated exclusively to domestic violence and how it is still a major unresolved issue in Russia. The article entitled “Вы звери, господа: правда и мифы о домашнем насилии”<sup>72</sup> discusses the alarming statistic that one in three women will experience domestic violence in their lifetime. Author Yekaterina Kolokoltseva, like Zaripova and Brintsyeva, provide information on the “Anna Center” and specifically interview Marin Pisklakova-Parker. Kolokoltseva discusses how domestic violence is all about control and power over women and how it doesn’t start outright with physical assault but begins by manipulation. Yet again, Kolokoltseva reiterates the way that violence can manifest in a relationship. She provides examples such as beatings, insults, humiliations, etc., but that these acts of violence all have one common goal: to subdue a woman and to control all of her actions. Kolokoltseva, however, also tries to provide the reader, like Zygmantovich, with ways to recognize and understand actions in a relationship that may potentially lead to a violent

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<sup>72</sup> “You are beasts, gentleman: Facts and Myths about Domestic Violence.”

relationship. She points out that sometimes jealousy is indeed not romantic when it becomes extreme, but that it is in fact a sign that the person is overly possessive and controlling. She also mentions that it is important to find out if your partner has a healthy relationship with his parents and to understand how he was raised, because if he witnessed his father beating his mother it is likely that he too will think that it is right and an act of “love” to beat his wife as well. Then Pisklakova-Parker talks about how one is able to detect if their friend or loved one is in a domestically violent relationship and what proper steps to take to ensure the safety of the victim in question. She says that women in Russia have a hard time believing that a man who is such a gentleman in public could be so brutal behind closed doors. This mentality in Russian women causes even more of a drawback for women who find it difficult to admit that they are being abused. Without support from other women, let alone the government, it can be very difficult for victims to admit that they are suffering. Marina Pisklakova-Parker though says that it is very pertinent that women help other women in these situations and that the earlier women are removed from violent relationships the easier it is and it helps prevent brutal beatings that eventually lead to death.

Kolokoltseva does not fail to bring the recurring theme of these articles to the table by bringing attention again to the lack of law and the implications it causes. Alexei Parshin, a Russian lawyer, explains that domestic violence currently falls under a minor offence in the court of law. Therefore the punishment for anyone convicted is only to pay a fine and do minimal correctional work providing them the opportunity to not only continue their abuse but eventually the opportunity to kill their partner. Another issue is

that these women are required, if they decide to press charges, to provide proof and other evidence of the abuse in court and act as the prosecutor for her own case, which invokes such intimidation in these female victims that few ever follow through with this procedure. Yet again the hopefulness for the passing of a newly drafted law is evident throughout the interview with Marina Pasklikova-Parker who has been fighting this battle for more than 20 years. Unlike the other three articles though, this one ends with the call for psychological testing and understanding of the offender and to try to help them put a stop to their abusive habits, which is a section of this new law that is still sitting in the Duma.

Overall it is interesting to conclude that most journalists focus on finding a resolution to the problem, rather than finding the causes of said problem and placing preventive measures that would stop future abuse and help both victim and offender find a peaceful resolution. Their focus is not so much on the trauma that abusers inflict on their victim and the classifications of these traumas, but rather the end results of said trauma, providing the readers with statistics of how many women suffer at the hands of their partners. It is also interesting to note that there are not many articles surrounding domestic violence, even though it seems to be a prevalent problem plaguing Russia. Rather, these articles pop up around the same time that women, such as Marina Pasklikova-Parker, attempt to have the Duma pass a new law defining domestic violence in the criminal code and also to put in place sanctions against offenders. Another side note is that many of these articles are written by women and the interviews in these articles are conducted primarily with women working to prevent domestic violence, and

no interviews are conducted with law officials or government representatives, who also are dealing with this same issue. There was little, with the exception of one article, mention of the psychological trauma victims endure that is a primary aspect of domestic violence cases, both during and after the offences.

### **3.2 “Then He Loves You”**

Whereas the Russian media and journalists focus on the need for a law, many Russian scholars, researchers, and academics in the field that study and analyze domestic violence place a majority of their focus on the types of violence that fall under the umbrella term of domestic violence, what the causes are of this problem, and the process of finding solutions to the problem. Although a lot of the statistics that journalists use in their publications originate in these research findings by academics, these findings usually provide a more in depth analysis of these statistics and seek to find out why these numbers are either very high or very low. They also hope to understand why certain stereotypes or beliefs continue to exist in the modern world.

The first article written by D.S. Shagako, a professor at Orenburg State University in Russia, hopes to understand the violence against women in the family. His article, “Насилие над женщиной в семье: виды, причины, поиски решения проблемы”<sup>73</sup> he discusses the idea of outlying factors that can cause stress in a person’s that may cause that person to release their frustrations on their family or their partners.

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<sup>73</sup> “Violence against Women in the Family: Types, Causes, and Finding Solutions to the Problem.”

He feels that due to the ever-growing globalization of the world and constant problems in the work forces around the world can cause moral strain and fatigue on men and women, but in this instance, he focuses primarily on men. He says that due to the oppression and suppression some men feel that they face in their daily lives both at home and at work causes them to release their frustration with the use of violence. Many resort to domestic violence because their victims are easy to locate, control, and manipulate. According to his research, Shagako estimates that every 4<sup>th</sup> family in Russia is currently experiencing, or has experienced in the past, some form of domestic violence. Each year around 30% of reported homicides in Russia happen within the family unit. The motives behind these murders have been admitted by the aggressors as either induced by jealousy, alcoholism, or all around hooliganism.

Shagako attempts to help understand first the meaning of violence against women and all that it encompasses. First he provides the United Nations definition of “violence against women” which was passed on December 20<sup>th</sup> 1993:

any act of violence committed on the basis of sex, which causes or may cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or personal life.<sup>74</sup>

But Shagako goes further to provide his own interpretation of this definition and idea of violence against women, or domestic violence. Shagako states that domestic violence or violence against women can not be reduced to a single act of physical violence; that it is

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<sup>74</sup> United Nations, General Assembly. (1993 December 20). *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, A/RES/48/104.

much wider and has to include sexual violence and an even more common violence, psychological (constant criticism, insults, and humiliation). It must also encompass the abusers need for constant control over the activities of women, which coupled with the abuse can lead to long-term depression in the victims of abuse and could potentially lead to ever more serious consequences, such as suicide attempts. The abusers end goal is to have the victim become dependent on them and only them.<sup>75</sup>

What though, are the reasons behind the violence between men and women, is the next section of his article. Admitting that this question is quite complex and dependent upon each individual abuser and the surrounding factors in his life. Scientists have found that it is difficult to pinpoint which motive or causation for this violence is the most important or relevant to the degree of abuse or violence the abuser will engage. Some agree that the relationship between his mother and father in the home which he grew up in plays a large factor in how he will treat his future wife or partner. Others talk about variety of mental illnesses, such as depression and self-doubt, which can affect many men or their dependencies on drugs or alcohol that can alter their state of mind. Another set of ideas is that it is all dependent upon cultural differences and situational differences, such as their position in society. It is believed that poverty levels can cause stress and strain in a man's life, which leads to the abuse of his partner in regards to finding power and control in some area of his life.

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<sup>75</sup> Шагако, Д. (2010). Насилие над женщиной в семье: виды, причины, поиски решения проблемы. *ББК72*, 72-75.

Shagako also points out that across the globe there has been a long held belief that a man has the right to physically punish their other half. Some societies even allowed the beating of their wife as a justified punishment and a need to show her who is the dominant one in the relationship<sup>76</sup>. He feels that even though the modern world has progressed many of these beliefs are still firmly implanted in men and even in some women. Even the addressing of domestic violence in the West did not come until the 1970's only 20 years earlier than the movements in Russia. He even states that with those 20 years difference the West is no better at finding a firm and absolute solution to put an end to domestic violence. When it was addressed in Russia in the mid-1990's it was only because of the United Nations World Conference in Beijing. After this conference more women movements began to try to reform policies and legislations. They even began building shelters and crisis centers for victims and had hotlines created for women to call. Shagako also points out the unduly differences between the statistics in the United States of America and those in Russia. In the USA a women is beaten every 9 seconds, but only around 3 women die from domestic abuse daily. Russia, however, says that every 40 minutes a women dies at the hands of her lover or partner providing them with a resounding 28 women dying daily due to domestic violence.

Shagako also critiques society's view of women in the same way that a few of the journalists do as well. He says that Russian women will still many times agree that the husband has the right to punish his wife for justified reasons. This mentality is still

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid. p 74

present in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and is still frustrating for those who are trying to eradicate gender based violence. Shagako concludes that, though a law would be an added bonus there are many other approaches that need to be explored. First he suggests a program or educations that actively promotes non-violence in the family setting, learning how to communicate in a healthy fashion in the family, and a program that is aimed at improving the legal literacy among the Russian citizens. He says that there is still a need for other developing innovative approaches that can help the prevention and deterrence of domestic violence in Russia.

In a different article published in the *Вестник Тогу: Экономическая, Социология и Демография*<sup>77</sup> in 2009, author N.A. Parigina discusses the role women have in society and why this is a crucial component to women becoming victims of violence in their relationships. Entitled “Общество и проблемы гендерного насилия<sup>78</sup>” the article seeks to use the socio-legal status of women that helps define their roles in the predetermined society. She states that this special legal status is determined first by the women’s reproductive function. This continued presence of inequality, established a women’s differing legal status, proves that the existence of social systems is reproducing discrimination that violates the equality of humans. Parigina goes on to provide two different forms of discriminations. The first form of discrimination is the reproducing of patriarchal views on the position of men and women in society. The second form is the perpetuation of these ideas in the legislative system, codes, laws, and regulations (p 238).

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<sup>77</sup> “Economic, Sociology and Demographic Bulletin of PNU.”

<sup>78</sup> “Society and the Problems of Gender-Based Violence.”



Another example is a study done in 2008, showed that a majority of people still believe inequality exists. Of the 390 people surveyed (194 men and 196 women) 60% of men and nearly 40% of women agreed that the man is still the head of the family in the modern society. These results succeed at showing the ever present patriarchal views that are still ingrained in the beliefs held by society as a whole. This same survey shoes that only 28% of men and women agree that there is still massive gender inequality in society, and another questions shows that 56% of men still see themselves as having a leadership role in society, but only 47% of women feel they hold any sort of leadership role.<sup>79</sup>

Women in Russia in the decade between 1999 and 2009 became rapidly more independent and somewhat emancipated. The new generation of women has become more educated and more likely to hold a well-paying job, but one issue that still remains is that society still believes these women should also be the perfect housewife and mother to even be considered on par with men in society. This survey also showed that in the past many women focused on having a cozy family and happy and healthy children. Now, however, they want to improve their professional career and combine both their professional and family spheres of life. The traditional Russian family, only 9% of women focused on their career, but the new modern family shows that 48% of women desire to focus on their careers. Many modern women depend largely on their personality, their environment, education, marital status, income, and various other

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<sup>79</sup> Парыгина, Н. (2009). Общество и проблемы гендерного насилия. *Экономическая Социология и демография*, 2(15), 239-242.

factors to create a comfortable living in today's world. Other women depend solely on the success and happiness of their family and are sometimes driven to have to work in order to provide this stability

In hopes to overcoming gender inequality this same group of men and women who were surveyed were asked if they thought it would be possible. These were the results: 36% of women and 45% of men believe that inequality and has been and always will be, 7% of women and 5% of men believe it is possible with the activism of women's rights movements, 14% of women and 8% of men think it is possible if the law was enforced/changed to accommodate equality, and a resounding 39% of women and 30% of men believe that it would be eliminated if men saw women as their equals.

In terms of using methods to resolving conflicts, this same survey showed that 37% of men and only 2% of women agree that the use of violence is an acceptable method to solving a conflict with a spouse. A total of 24% of men admitted to having used violence against women, but 36% of women have confessed to having been abused by a man. Parigina concludes that the reason why the percentage of women is higher than men is because many men don't believe certain acts are violent. A total of 15% of these Russian men believe that violence for "educational" purposes is completely justified. 41% of men say that under certain conditions violence is permissible, but although that number is staggering an even more horrific statistic is that 13% of women also agree that there are certain times or conditions that violence is warranted against them. A total of 60% of women in Russia exposed to domestic violence say that the male is the head of the household.

Parigina states that although the belief that home is the safest place for a person, this belief has been compromised because for these abused women it has become a place where their physical and mental health have been compromised. A total of 17% of these abused women have said that their abuse was in the form of humiliation and insults, 15% say it was in the form of beatings and punchings, and around 9% said it was in the form of limiting their financial freedom. It is important to understand, as Parigina reiterates throughout the article, no woman is immune from domestic violence in today's modern world. Prior beliefs of domestic violence only existing in poverty ridden families have been dispelled as more and more educated women come forward with stories of their own abuse. Overall, Parigina says that the most common form of violence against women in today's generation is the causing of insult and humiliation to the dignity of the women, which is used to weaken women in general. Again Parigina, provides her own interpretation of violence as being a system constructed to establish power and control over another human being.<sup>80</sup>

She concludes her findings of her survey by saying that a majority of women believe that the problem of violence against women can be solved. They believe that the formation of programs to help teach the new generation about the principles of humanism and gender equality can be the stepping stone to helping prevent future domestic violence and to help preserve a better status for women in society.

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<sup>80</sup> All of the statistics provided by Parigina can be found in her work on pages 239-242.

### **3.3 Future of Russian Women's Centers**

The reason for the examination of double journalists compared to the academics and scholarly research is due to the extensive amount of material provided by the researchers compared to the 1-2 page blurbs that journalists post for their newspapers or websites. With this evidence though it is easy to conclude that the journalists hope to appease society by pushing and advocating for the passing of a law that will help define and deter domestic violence. The academic researchers, however, provide a different set of options and approaches to help catch and put a stop to beliefs and stereotypes surrounding violence against women and to try to provide help for those men who feel a need to resort to anger and violence in order to feel domination and power over their partner or family. The academic researchers dealt with questions in regards to how women viewed themselves, how men viewed women, what the psychological damage could mount too, and even how men and women view and understand violence. The media journalists, thought attempting to educate a larger audience, apparently just regurgitated facts and numbers and provided resources from women to escape violent situations, but they did not focus on finding a lasting solution to help prevent the violence from the beginning.

Hopefully the larger focus will shift towards these journalists writing about what the scholars and academics find to be more valuable and important for society to know which is: what domestic violence really is. It is easy for journalists posting in a magazine or newspaper to provide quick facts and statistics, but the reality appears to be that many

women may not even realize that they are victims of this violence themselves. Another interesting trend in domestic violence articles in newspapers and magazines, is that they tend to appear whenever domestic violence is relevant in the news, or if there is the potential for a new law to be passed in the State Duma.

## Conclusions and Future Directions

With the evidence provided in the previous sections, it is obvious that there is a difference between ‘Western’ and Russian views and characterizations of domestic violence. Although there is an ongoing dialogue between the women in Russia and the West through journals and other magazines<sup>1</sup> many of their positions are on different areas of domestic violence. Many of the Russian scholars and academics are still trying to help provide a definition and understanding for what domestic violence is for Russian people and why this is a problem that needs to be addressed. Westerners, however, already have a presumed understanding of what domestic violence is according to how it is defined in their country, which is dependent on a completely different cultural structure and context from that in Russia. It then makes sense that their focus would be on the crisis centers and shelters and how to support centers in their endeavor to help victims.

Another issue is the lack of continuous research and data being done by both Russians and Westerners who are concerned with the issue of domestic violence in Russia. Much of this research was done in the late 1990’s or early 2000’s with the exception of two of Johnson’s works in 2007 and 2009. But even with Johnson’s later works (2013) it is still clear that it is difficult to obtain figures surrounding domestic violence in Russia. The most recent Russian newspaper articles that address the issue of domestic violence at a time when a potential new law may have been passed in the State Duma. Even then there articles were brief and curt only providing quick facts and

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<sup>1</sup> Azhgikhina, N. (2001) pp 227-230

statistics about the violence and how the law may possibly help with deterrence. These articles were published online in 2012, which by then the option to have the public comment on them was available and the comments are only proof of the bigger picture. On these articles, as on almost any article of domestic violence worldwide, there are negative people, both men and women, who continue to blame the women for the violence that is forced upon them. Victim blaming still exists in contemporary society, and even more so in contemporary Russia.

Overall it would be more beneficial for Western scholars to help these Russian women to educate society on what domestic violence is and why it needs to stop, rather than critiquing the structure of their women's shelters. What is the point of a women's shelter when most of the population still doesn't really understand what domestic violence is and who could be possible victims?

## **Appendix A**

Статьи Уголовного Кодекса Российской Федерации (раздел VII. Преступления против личности.)

Ст. 110- Доведение до самоубийства

Ст. 111- Умышленное причинение тяжкого вреда здоровью

Ст. 112- Умышленное причинение средней тяжести вреда здоровью

Ст. 113- Причинение тяжкого или средней тяжести вреда здоровью в состоянии аффекта

Ст. 115- Умышленное причинение легкого вреда здоровью

Ст. 116- Побой

Ст. 117- Истязание

Ст. 119- Угроза убийством или причинением тяжкого вреда здоровью

Ст. 124- Неоказание помощи больному

Ст. 125- Оставление в опасности



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