

**Global Feminisms
Comparative Case Studies of
Women's Activism and Scholarship**

RUSSIA

Natal'ia Mikhailovna Rimashevskaja

Interviewed by Natal'ia Pushkareva

Moscow, Russia

July, 2016

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Natal'ia Mikhailovna Rimashevskaja was born on March 29, 1932, in Moscow. She is a Doctor of Economics (1976), professor at Moscow State University (1978) and at the Academy of Labor and Social Relations. In 1955 she graduated from the Department of Law at Moscow State University (along with Mikhail and Raisa Gorbachev,¹ with whom she has always been close) and from the Moscow Financial Institute in 1957.

After defending her candidate's dissertation, she worked for about 10 years as an economist-demographer at the Research Institute of the Ministry of Labor, then for 20 years was a fellow at the Central Economic Mathematical Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences. When perestroika² began, she was at the top of her field thanks to the creation of her Laboratory on Issues of Gender, within the Institute of Social and Economic Studies of the Population, which she also organized in 1988. Until 2005, she was a director of the institute and the head of the Laboratory (currently she is the head of the Laboratory and a curator of its projects). In 1999 N.M. Rimashevskaja received the title of Distinguished Worker in the Sciences of the Russian Federation. In 2003, she was elected as an associate member of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Social Sciences Division). She is a full member of the Russian Academy of Life Sciences and the editor-in-chief for the journal *Population*. She is a UN expert on issues of aging populations, a member of the European Association for Population Studies (EAPS) and of the European Association of the Demographic Unions (EADU).

She is the author of over 400 publications on socio-economic demographics, with a focus on gender issues, economic sociology, women's and men's health. Among her monographs are well-known titles, such as *Equality or Justice?* (co-authored with A.A. Rimashevskiy) (Moscow: Finances and Statistics, 1991); *A Window into Russian Private Life: Married Couples in 1986* (1999); *Gender Aspects of Socio-Economic Transformation in Russia* (2000). *Women, Men, Family in Russia in the Last Third of the 20th Century. Project "Taganrog"* (2001); *Breaking the Cycle of Silence... On Violence Toward Women* (2005); *Health and Healthcare in Gender Dimension* (2007); and *Gender Stereotypes in Changing Society: Experience of Comprehensive Social Research* (2009).

Natal'ia L'vovna Pushkareva was born on September 23rd, 1959 in Moscow, Russia. She is currently a Professor, Chief Research Fellow, and the Head of the Womens and Gender Studies Department at the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology at the Russian Academy of Sciences. Her fields of interest include gender history, history of family relations, the social anthropology of the academic community, as well as the history of sexuality in medieval, modern, and contemporary Russia. The chief editor of the yearbook *Sotsial'naiia istoriia (Social History)*, she also serves as president of the Russian Association for Research in Women's History. From 1981 to 2016, she has

¹ Mikhail Gorbachev (born 1931) was the leader of the Soviet Union from March 1985 to August 1991. Raisa Gorbachev (1932-1999) was his wife and an activist who dedicated much of her time to Soviet public life and children's health. ("Mikhail Gorbachev." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail_Gorbachev Accessed October 23, 2019. "The International Non-Governmental foundation for socio-economic and political studies (The Gorbachev Foundation) - Raisa Gorbacheva - Biography." Горбачев Фонд. Accessed March 05, 2018. <http://www.gorby.ru/en/gorbacheva/biography/>.)

² Perestroika, literally translated as "restructuring," describes a collection of economic and political reforms and a general intellectual atmosphere that advocated for higher standards of living and greater socialist self-governance. The term was first introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev in the USSR in 1985. (Historyguide.org. Accessed December 02, 2017. <http://www.historyguide.org/europe/lecture16.html#perestroika>.)

edited more than thirty essay collections, published dozens of articles for both academic and non-academic magazines, and written dictionary and encyclopedia entries as well as monographs. Pushkareva is considered to be a principal founder of the field of women's studies in Russia.

The Global Feminisms Project is a collaborative international oral history project that examines feminist activism, women's movements, and academic women's studies in sites around the world. Housed at the University of Michigan, the project was started in 2002 with a grant from the Rackham Graduate School. The virtual archive includes interviews from women activists and scholars from Brazil, China, India, Nicaragua, Poland, and the United States.

Our collaborator in Russia is Dr. Natal'ia L. Pushkareva, who gathered a diverse group of feminist scholar-activists and colleagues for the Russia portion of the Global Feminisms Project and conducted the majority of the interviews. Our work in Russia was supported by a Collaborative Planning Grant from University of Michigan's Institute for Research on Women and Gender.

Key words: research, funding, gender and health, fatherhood, family

Natal'ia Pushkareva: Good afternoon, Natal'ia Rimashevskaja. Today we have an opportunity to talk to you about how our field impacts our lives and influences other things that surround us in our professional and other worlds. If you would please introduce yourself first, and then I'll ask you some questions.

Natal'ia Rimashevskaja: Well, I also would like to greet you. I am pleased that we're meeting again. I am Natal'ia Mikhailovna Rimashevskaja, I lead the Laboratory on Gender Issues at our institute, in that very institute that I once created. That was in 1988, right? And it's most interesting that even up to now—though it's called the Institute of Social and Economic Studies... the Institute of Social and Economic Studies of the Population [ISESP]—that I ended up heading the Laboratory of Gender Studies.³ After I declined to be the director there, the second director came up to me and said, "Natal'ia, why are you involved with gender? You have organized this institute, all of it is yours! So why gender?" I said, "yes, that's right, but gender, it permeates all of our issues, all of our research from start to finish. Everything that was before us and everything that will come after." That's why I just find it interesting. I'm not talking about whether it was fashionable or not at the time – the significance of gender has changed a lot. A lot – but I continue to be loyal to the subject. I have this foolishness, that I am always loyal.

NP: Natal'ia, please tell us: was there a turning point, either in the life of the country or in your professional life that led to the creation of the laboratory ?

NR: You mean of Gender Issues?

NP: Yes, the Laboratory of Gender Issues.

NR: It was created just before the institute itself was created, and that was at the end of the... in the second half of the 80's. You know what was happening at that time. That time was the time of perestroika.⁴ In general, there were new creative juices, new developments, and new influences of world public opinion, global relations, all impacting, among others, the USSR.⁵ I think that's exactly what played a role. And the atmosphere of this time, that of Perestroika I really attribute to Gorbachev's⁶ activity.

³ The Institute of Social and Economic Studies of the Population is part of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The Institute of Social and Economic Studies of Population performs research in the field of socio-economic issues including topics relating to population health, improving quality of life, and social policy. ("Our Institute." Русский. Accessed March 05, 2018. <http://www.isesp-ras.ru/en/>.) The Russian Academy of Sciences was established in 1724 and is a civil, self-governed, non-commercial organization chartered by the Government of Russia, headquartered in Moscow. (In Russian: About Us, The Russian Academy of Sciences, <http://www.ras.ru/about.aspx>.)

⁴ Perestroika, literally translated as "restructuring," describes a collection of economic and political reforms and a general intellectual atmosphere that advocated for higher standards of living and greater socialist self-governance. The term was first introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev in the USSR in 1985. (Historyguide.org. Accessed December 02, 2017. <http://www.historyguide.org/europe/lecture16.html#perestroika>.)

⁵ The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), also known as the Soviet Union, was a socialist state that existed from 1922 to 1991. It was succeeded by the Russian Federation after the Cold War.

⁶ Mikhail Gorbachev was the leader of the Soviet Union from March 1985 – August 1991

Although now, gradually, he is being forgotten. He is being forgotten. I think that's not right and not fair. He is remembered only for his mistakes, for what he didn't finish, and so on. In fact, it was not so, but that's a subject of another story.

NP: At the time, when the Laboratory was created, and there was an interest in gender issues, were you working at The Institute of Social and Economic Studies of the Population at the RAS?

NR: No, that institute did not exist then.

NP: Where is the laboratory then?

NR: The Laboratory was at the institute where I was at that time.

NP: And which institute is that?

NR: And that was the institute...

NP: Of Sociology?

NR: No. How was it called? The Institute of Socio-Economic... No, it was not yet then... It was the Institute for the Study of Domestic Economic Issues.⁷ That was in CEMI [the Central Economic Mathematical Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences].⁸

NP: Was your work there somehow a continuation after you graduated from the Department of Finances and Statistics...⁹

NR: Yes, yes, yes! After I graduated with 2 degrees in law and finance, and I worked at CEMI. And my doctoral dissertation was on mathematical issues of prosperity economics, oddly enough.

NP: About incomes or something like that...

NR: Including income, yes. But later, at the end of the 80's, when a decision was made to create a new institute – ISESP; that's when I left CEMI and other such structures and created this Laboratory. Such a group already existed at that time, before this institute...

NP: The Economic Institute?

⁷ The Institute for the Study of Domestic Economic Issues, also known as the Institute of Economic Forecasting, is an institute within the Russia Academy of Sciences that analyzes current socioeconomic standings, predicts future situations, and develops strategies for economic policy. ("Institute of Economic Forecasting, Russian Federation." Eldis. <https://www.eldis.org/organisation/A4403> Accessed December 4, 2019.)

⁸ CEMI is an economic research institute established in 1963 in Moscow. Their work focuses primarily on econometrics, economic theory, and mathematical economics. ("Central Economic Mathematical Institute." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Economic_Mathematical_Institute Accessed October 24, 2019.)

⁹ The Department of Finances and Statistics is a department of study within Moscow State University.

NR: I'll tell you. There were three people (myself, Anastasia Posadskaia¹⁰ and Natal'ia Zakharova¹¹). You're doing interviews with them, right?

NP: Well, one of them is far away now, and the other – we haven't heard from her.

NR: Yes, yes. That's right. So in 1987 we wrote an article, after Natal'ia Zakharova went to a conference on women, in Africa... She came back and we wrote an article "How We Solve the Woman's Question."¹²

NP: Which was published where?

NR: In the journal *Communist!*¹³ Also because the institute did not exist and nothing else was available. And no one read that article of ours at the time. Despite the fact that it was translated in 14 countries. Another impetus for the creation of the Laboratory on Gender Issues was the fact that Anastasia Posadskaia could not defend her Candidate's Dissertation.¹⁴ She was a graduate student at the Institute of Economics, and there everyone said, "some women, who needs this, what's new about it?" and they all mixed up the word "gender" with the word "tender." And so here is Posadskaia with no one to get her degree...

So as I was creating the institute, she came to me and said, "Natal'ia, let me defend with you as my chair, because... ", she said with tears in her eyes. I remember, she was talking and crying all the time. Because she had her dissertation ready, but no one would let her defend. That was the situation. As soon as the institute was created, in 1988, I organized quickly enough a print publication for the institute and the dissertation committee, so it would be possible to defend; and Anastasia, I would say, was the first who defended on

¹⁰ Anastasia Posadskaia is a Russian activist who has been directly involved in the women's movement in the USSR. She is one of the founders of the LOTOS (League for Emancipation from Social Stereotypes) group and helped create the Center for Gender Studies in the USSR. Along with Natal'ia Zakharova and Natal'ia Rimachevskaia, she wrote an article detailing the "subordination of women in the USSR". (Molyneux, Maxine, and Anastasya Posadskaya. "Interview with Anastasya Posadskaya (25 September 1990)." *Feminist Review*, no. 39 (1991): 133-40. doi:10.2307/1395449.)

¹¹ Natal'ia Zakharova is an economist from the Institute of Mathematics and co-founded the LOTOS group (League for Emancipation from Sexual Stereotypes). She also helped establish the Center for Gender Studies in the USSR in 1990. (Marsh, Rosalind J. 1996. "Women in Russia and Ukraine." *Google Books*, Cambridge University Press. https://books.google.com/books/about/Women_in_Russia_and_Ukraine.html?id=GXSsgcs953cC)

¹² In this article, Zakharova, Posadskaia, and Rimachevskaia advocate for "genuine equality" and ending "all forms of discrimination" by redefining the responsibilities of men in the family, instead of the women returning to the home. (Engel, B.A. 2004. *Women in Russia, 1700-2000*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.)

¹³ *Kommunist* was a monthly theoretical journal published in the Soviet Union and was the official journal of the Communist party. It is still published today, although it has been renamed to *Svobodnaia*. ("Communist Party of the Soviet Union." Encyclopaedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Communist-Party-of-the-Soviet-Union> Accessed October 31, 2019. "Kommunist." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kommunist> Accessed October 31, 2019.)

¹⁴ The Candidate of Sciences is the Soviet Union equivalent of a PhD. However, it is only the first of two doctoral level scientific degrees in the former Soviet countries. The second degree, the Doctor of Sciences, often requires ten years of additional, original research and is equivalent to the "habilitation" qualification in Europe. ("Candidate of Sciences." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Candidate_of_Sciences Accessed October 31, 2019.)

this subject. And later... You know about her.¹⁵ It was such a turning point. A turning point in all sense... You know, I'll tell you know that...

NP: What happened then between the writing of the article published in *Communist* in 1985 (which is now considered an absolute classic, and from which all our research began) and the creation of the Laboratory on Gender Issues, in other words the institutionalization of gender studies? Were there any projects?

NR: Nothing. There was nothing. No, no, no. Nothing, nothing. There was nothing until... Well, because the Laboratory was created immediately, as soon as the Institute was created in 1988, and one of the first of its laboratories was on gender.

NP: And you headed it?

NR: I headed it from its beginning to its end.

NP: Who worked there, besides those who we've already mentioned?

NR: Who we've mentioned? Hmm, I don't know. I can give you a book titled *Gender Aspects of Social Transformation* by Marina Malysheva.¹⁶ In it...

NP: Marina was there, as we know, at that time.

NR: Yes, yes. Yes, yes. She... Everyone defended under me.

NP: And Elena Mashkova¹⁷ probably.

NR: Who?

NP: Elena Mashkova.

NR: Mashkova. She was my master's student. We got to the institute in a big truck. She wanted to become a doctoral student, but it didn't work out... Not everyone's defense was successful. And here...

NP: And Zoia Khotkina¹⁸ was probably there.

¹⁵ This is in reference to the great success Anastasia Posadskaia had as a Russian activist after she was able to defend her Candidate's Dissertation.

¹⁶ Marina Malysheva is an economist working as a senior researcher at the Institute of Social Economic Studies of the Population and the Russian Academy of Sciences. She was also involved in the creation of the Moscow Center of Gender Research in 1990. (See more information and her interview by the Global Feminisms Project at <https://globalfeminisms.umich.edu/en/russia>.)

¹⁷ Elena Mashkova holds a PhD in economics and works as a consultant with the Center for Marketing Research in Tatarstan. In 2001, she was named "Woman of the Year" by the official women's group called "Women of Tartarstan." ("Democratization and Gender Politics in Post-Soviet Russia: The View from Tatarstan." Wilson Center. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/democratization-and-gender-politics-post-soviet-russia-the-view-tatarstan> Accessed December 4, 2019.)

¹⁸ Zoia Aleksandrovna Khotkina was one of the original organizing committee members of the "Independent Women's Forum" in 1994. She is regarded as one of the "earliest activists" in Russia's women's movement. (Corigliano, Norma Noonan, et al. 2001. Encyclopedia of Russian Women's Movements. *Google Books*, Greenwood Publishing Group. https://books.google.com/books/about/Encyclopedia_of_Russian_Women_s_Movement.html?id=Qk-ICsx5L90C)

NR: Hmm?

NP: Zoia Khotkina.

NR: Yes. Yes, see here: So Posadskaia, Rimashevskaja, Rakovskaia (you probably don't know her, she moved to Lithuania), Khotkina, Elena Tiuriukanova¹⁹, and I don't think there are any more of ours here... Ah, wait, Meshcherkina.

NP: Meshcherkina who is now Rozhdestvenskaia.

NR: I don't know what she goes by now... We wanted to find her... So... Anyways, Luniakova... Voronina wasn't there, she was where she is now...²⁰ Klimenkova.²¹

NP: Tania.

NR: Tania, right. So this was one of our first...

NP: Collection of articles.

NR: Yes. We called them—well, because they're green—we called them “Afghans.”²² And here I'd like to... You know, I found, err, I have this article, which is called “50 Years in Academia.”

NP: Right.

NR: It was published in 2009, so that was “50”... No. That was “50 Years,” a long time. And I wrote: “The concept of gender is not simply a linguistic innovation, it represents the beginning of changes to the scholarly paradigm in the analysis of social phenomena.. The introduction of the term 'gender'²³ signified one of the most important achievements in modern sociology.” I think that all of this remains true. “All aspects of life and the human condition are colored by the determinacy of relationships between the sexes, including the specific differences between categories of 'sex' and 'gender'. In fact, 'gender' permeates all areas of life.” I just wanted to say that my current director

¹⁹ Elena Tyuryukanova from the ISESP is a social researcher and defender of migrant rights. (“Interview with Elena Tyuryukanova.” RT International. Accessed March 05, 2018. <https://www.rt.com/news/interview-with-elena-tyuryukanova/>.)

²⁰ Olga Voronina is a professor at the Institute of Philosophy under the Russian Academy of Sciences. The Global Feminisms Project has an interview with Voronina. See the GFP Russia Site for more details at: <https://glblfem.sites.uofmhosting.net/en/russia>

²¹ Tat'iana Alekseevna Klimenkova was a founding committee member of the “Independent Women's Forum” and an active member in the “Free Association of Feminist Organizations.” She also became a Professor at the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow. (Corigliano, Norma Noonan, et al. 2001. Encyclopedia of Russian Women's Movements. *Google Books*, Greenwood Publishing Group. https://books.google.com/books/about/Encyclopedia_of_Russian_Women_s_Movement.html?id=Qk-ICsx5L90C)

²² This is a reference to the uniforms worn by Soviet soldiers in the Soviet-Afghan war (1979-1989), which were called “Afghans” (*afganki*) and were green. See “Афганка — Википедия,” accessed May 5, 2019, <https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%90%D1%84%D0%B3%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%BA%D0%B0>.

²³ The word gender here not only refers to the identity one holds regarding their sex, but also the societal roles and expectations that are associated with their identity.

once pestered me about what I write and why I didn't change the name of my laboratory and didn't leave because...

NP: It will soon be 30 years since it started...

NR: Yes. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. And he now understands that we are definitely making progress. It would be impossible otherwise. There is no other way.

NP: Would you outline what, within 25-28 years or so, were the main achievements? Which ones would you consider the most important and meaningful of the laboratory's existence?

NR: Well, I can say that... First of all, the subject of "gender and family." The family is present in the study of economics, undoubtedly, but it is present in a completely different way [than how gender-based relationships are studied in a family]. The subject of "gender and family" places a completely different emphasis on things. Why did I care about gender research so much? Because all of the studies that I have conducted for 50 or more, 60 years, I did all of it on the basis of the study of the family. All my work has this family context. And gender also has that context. This is one meaningful direction of study that we have opened.

The second one, which I consider very significant and substantial from all points of view, is "gender and health." Because... well, it's obvious why. Because so far, we have been and are still heading backwards as a society. Along with the assessment of society as a sick organism. This is the second direction of study. And gender here means so much.

And the third direction of study that I wanted to mention—we started it then and had to take a hiatus—is gender... gender—I'll think of it—gender and violence. Domestic violence. Although we had the subject of domestic violence before, now we are expanding it. And gender and the family. That direction has led us to research on fatherhood. You probably know that now the topic has become fashionable, but it just so happened that we managed to get funding for this subject too. I am very delighted, this is a completely new direction. And the rest, as I say, because of the extent to which gender permeates all aspects of society, it is very difficult to separate one direction of study from another.

NP: How did you get interested, how did you find out about the subject of gender? And how did you get interested in it?

NR: Let me tell you! Just about myself... The thing is that somehow I have been able to sense what is going to happen in a year, in two, in three. I've been able to sense where I need to go. Like a cat. Absolutely. I made so many, so to say, new moves that no one else had done. Although I can't call myself a classical demographer, I studied population from the beginning of my academic life. First, I developed family as subject in scholarship. Before me, in general, hardly anyone had studied family issues. I can literally count on my fingers the names of those who studied the family. All of my studies were on family. So I believe that... that's first. And second...

NP: All of you studies on family were demographic or sociological?²⁴

NR: Hmm?

NP: Sociological or demographic?

NR: More likely, demographic. Well, maybe, partly, one could say, sociological. First of all, there is the Taganrog Project²⁵ (I just can't get rid of it). The second is gender. Like I've said already, at that time no one could agree with the subject of gender. They said, "gender, whatever, why is it necessary, no one cares, no one needs it, we have something different." But I began to pursue it anyway. And the third is health. Not in terms of a number of hospital beds or doctors, but in terms of health and its assessment, what happens with health. What's happening with health, what factors, what we can expect and where we are going? So I can say that... When... Well, a little...

NP: And when did you first hear the word "gender"?

NR: "Gender"? Natal'ia Zakharova brought it.

NP: From Africa.

NR: From Africa. When they had that World Congress.²⁶

NP: And what was your attitude to feminism in the 1980's,²⁷ when perestroika and all that began?

NR: You know, I would not say that I ignored feminism, but... let it exist side by side with gender. Feminism is feminism, and gender is gender. Possibly, the difference between the two has to do with the notion that "gender" is closer to economics than feminism. "Feminism" more likely has to do with sociology.

²⁴ Sociology is a social science concerned with society, patterns of social relationships, social interactions, and the culture of everyday life. Demography is a subfield of sociology, and studies elements of human populations, such as their size and structure. ("Demography." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demography> Accessed October 17, 2019. "Sociology." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociology> Accessed October 17, 2019.)

²⁵ Rimashevskaja wrote *The Woman, the Man, and the Family in Russia* after studying the deeply impoverished community of Taganrog. Klugman, Jenny. «Poverty in Russia Public Policy and Private Responses.» Economic Development Institute of The World Bank. (Klugman, Jeni. *Poverty in Russia: public policy and private responses*. World Bank: Washington, D.C., 1997. pg. 128)

²⁶ The World Congress is an organization that connects professionals and industry leaders to discuss research and exchange ideas in order to advance the healthcare, legal, and pharma industries. ("About World Congress." World Congress. <https://www.worldcongress.com/corporate/about.cfm> Accessed October 17, 2019.)

²⁷ This period in Russia was defined by reform, including greater freedom of speech and the ability to organize. This allowed for an outbreak of political action led by women and the formation of grassroots organizations to promote emotional support and the sharing of resources. Funding from outside organizations and the exchange of information with foreign activists and researchers also advanced the movement. This was an unprecedented level of activity of the feminist movement in Russia. ("Reviewing the Changing Situation of Women in Russian Society." E-International Relations Student. <https://www.e-ir.info/2014/12/20/reviewing-the-changing-situation-of-women-in-russian-society/> Accessed October 29, 2019. "Feminism in Russia." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism_in_Russia Accessed October 29, 2019.)

NP: And politics.

NR: Yes, and politics too. So there was that Mariia..²⁸ So I never said much publicly or acted as a public intellectual, though I met with Kon quite often.²⁹ I think, that there is a place for everyone in this field, and everyone can do what he/she wants and is capable of.

NP: When a person is involved in gender studies, that person may not necessarily hold feminist views?

NR: Well, the point is that... Well, what do you mean "not hold"? You don't have to hold them... so what? Because of that they...

NP: That is, the study of gender and the politics of feminism are not related? Are gender studies not related to feminism?

NR: No, gender studies don't depend on the ideas at the core of feminism. I think that when any sort of clashes happen, and when fields and subjects intersect, it is best not to interfere with another movement, another division, another part of research structures. It seems so to me. In general, I never liked, you know, to fight with anyone...

NP: Sometimes it is possible to fight not with someone, but...

NR: With something?

NP: But fight for something. No, for something. Positive progress. Positive as in for, not against. And consequently, a question emerges: if we share in the ideas of theoretical feminism,³⁰ which direct us to support women under any circumstances, and because for a long time, for many centuries, as one may say, women and womanliness were oppressed, unequal and regarded as less than full citizens, then we want now to do everything possible to get not so much full equality of rights, but rather an understanding of uniqueness of "womanhood."³¹ And modern liberal feminism³² has this as its...

²⁸ Mariia Arbatova is a writer and playwright whose work focuses heavily on the female body and reproduction including themes such as abortion, gynecology, and children born out of wedlock. (Gessen, Masha. *Dead again: the Russian intelligentsia after Communism*. London: Verso, 1997.)

²⁹ Igor' Kon was a scientist and sociologist who focused his studies on the sexuality of man and children in the context of Soviet feminism. Kon died in 2011 at the age of 82. Borusyak, Lyubov. "In Memoriam Igor Kon: a personal view." Open Democracy Russia and Beyond. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/lyubov-borusyak/in-memoriam-igor-kon-personal-view>. (23 May, 2017).

³⁰ This refers to feminist theory, which examines the nature of gender inequality and aims to support women in society. ("Feminist theory." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_theory Accessed November 6, 2019.)

³¹ "Gender essentialism" refers to the innate qualities attributed to women and men. The "uniqueness of womanhood" likely refers to the view that there are biological and psychological features of gender that are unique to women. ("Gender essentialism." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_essentialism Accessed October 23, 2019.)

³² Liberal feminism focuses on gaining equality for men and women through equal legal and political rights. ("Feminist Thought." Google Books. Accessed March 05, 2018. <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=cv5EAQAQBAJ&pg=PT17#v=onepage&q&f=false>.)

NR: Goal.

NP: Yes, its goal. Its goal is to gradually and slowly create this understanding, one way or another. And in these conditions, I would definitely like to see a desire to support women in gender studies, including in a field, such as demography, or demographic and socio-demographic research. And a desire to be in their shoes and understand them. And that's why I think that here our personal and professional lives—and the choice of our subject of study—can be very closely connected with what we write in our future research and what questions and goals we establish in it. So here is my question: your work, let's say in family demography, did it somehow impact your personal life or vice versa? Were there issues that you came across in your life that prompted you to explore them academically? That is, have problems that you encountered personally affected or initiated some scholarly...

NR: In regards to the subjects of "feminism" and "gender", I think here it's a question of naming. In other words, how it unfolded, the research, the results in the area of gender that we achieved in our socio-economic research... possibly, we just didn't call them by the right name? Maybe it was feminism, and we just didn't use the word. Or vice versa, used it there, where... In general, it seems that it's mostly an issue of terminology.

When it comes to my personal life and so on, I... I would say that I analyzed it very little. Did I want to apply scholarly discoveries to myself and others around me? Well, not much, but I had a challenging life. I lived a very challenging life, and, moreover, I've been around for a while...

NP: And you raised two sons and were obviously a mother.

NR: Yes, both mother and grandmother, etc.

NP: That is, all the feminine social roles, you've already...

NR: Passed them, yes.

NP: At the very least, you've tried them all.. And so another question arises: in your personal life, were you ever faced with issues that received attention later academically?

NR: My position in scholarship, in the broadest sense of the word "scholarship," was grew out of the ideas that have developed in gender studies well before us. So that's ok.

NP: What interesting projects have you worked on and initiated at the Laboratory of Gender Issues?

NR: I've always maintained that my greatest achievement has been in socio-economic research conducted in the project "Taganrog."

NP: What is "Taganrog"? When did it begin?

NR: "Taganrog" was launched in the second half of the '60s and now, I think, is, how old? - almost 50 years old. And now we...

NP: And how did it get this name and what were its goals?

NR: Well, it was called “Taganrog” because... Social... Well, I’ll tell you. Because the projected unfolded and developed over the course of almost fifty years, the name changed frequently, but the content always concerned socio-economic relationships. Socio-economic relationships. First and foremost, those in the family - the relationships between husband and wife, men and women.

NP: In an average-sized Russian city.

NR: Well, we... I’ll tell you that we in some sense didn’t even choose it,³³ because this study was initiated, strangely enough, in the Central Committee of the Soviet Union Communist Party!³⁴ Yes, yes, yes, they had their reasons. They wanted to know what was happening in society. Because sociology was emerging as a science at that time, and there still wasn’t any information or research. As a matter of fact, A.G. Kharchev³⁵ was the first sociologist who presented our research to the Central Committee.

NP: That’s Kharchev, the one with the theory of the family.

NR: Yes, that’s one of his. Yes, Kharchev. I think he was the first sociologist at that time. And the authorities wanted to know what was generally happening in society. “Well, what?! What do we have? We’re the leaders of the society, so what is it? What...?”

NP: Were women's organizations already in existence at that time?

NR: Women's organizations had only just begun to form. Only just begun. And even...

NP: Did they exist before perestroika or not?

NR: Well, no, they existed, but they were weak. And later, during perestroika, they became much stronger, especially because there was a huge influx from the West, an influx of people who wanted to see what the Soviet Union was like and to taste it for themselves. This was one thing. And, second, at that time money was there. And with such resources...

NP: What aspects of women’s studies were examined in the “Taganrog” Project?

NR: We had within the Taganrog Project five projects. The period we examined—almost 45 or 47 years—was divided into parts: the first few periods were 10-year intervals, and the last few were 5-year periods. Those last shorter intervals were because of perestroika. It was more interesting during perestroika to examine the results before

³³ Unclear whether she means the site or the topic of study.

³⁴ The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR was the highest governing communist body in the USSR and held primary authority over the Party congresses. (“Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.” Wikipedia. November 26, 2017. Accessed December 05, 2017. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Committee_of_the_Communist_Party_of_the_Soviet_Union.)

³⁵ A.G. Kharchev was a Russian sociologist who researched the role of the ‘family’ in the Soviet era. (Weinberg, Elizabeth A. *Sociology in the Soviet Union and Beyond: social enquiry and social change*. S.I.: Taylor & Francis, 2017.)

the 10-year periods we originally had were over. The main indicators... Well, which ones do I mean? Education and so on... I can't say that the project studied anything new because, in general, it was a rather traditional set of indicators: employment, in the broad sense... Income, income and consumption, intra-family relations. That's two – I mean three. And all of it distributed by sex. Then there was health again.

NP: Of men and women.

NR: Yes, of men and women, of course. Generally speaking, we made particular discoveries at that time that still no one wants to understand or accept, oddly enough.

I've generally lived a very quiet life and everything that is happening now, I've already been through it... What's happening in our society now, I've seen it before. I know it already... Where it begins and where it is going to end. And in what...

NP: Is there a new subject out there? Which hasn't been studied yet and has to do with gender?

NR: I think the subject of fatherhood³⁶ is new.

NP: The study of fatherhood developed here, in our scholarship, by Igor' Semenovich Kon?

NR: I don't know...

NP: He wrote a book *The Boy is the Father of the Man*.³⁷ It's a collection of views on fatherhood by an ethnologist and anthropologist.

NR: To tell the truth, I didn't know about his research on this topic.

NP: He's more of a theoretician because he bases his work on what others have done, on empirical materials that were collected earlier.

NR: In any case, I haven't seen this book...

NP: Do you have financial support for a project that would allow you to collect the material to study fatherhood?

NR: We do. Yes, yes. And by the way...

NP: This is in your "Taganrog" project or in all of your projects?

³⁶ Motherhood, and the role of women in the home, has been studied extensively throughout feminist and gender scholarship. However, the study of fatherhood has not been of high importance in Russia until recently.

³⁷ *The Boy is the Father of the Man* studies contemporary boyhood as a socio-cultural construction. It examines many questions, such as the unique challenges that boys face, why boys struggle more in school and exhibit more aggression, and the role of family and society in their development. (*Мальчик — отец мужчины* (*Mal'chik—otets muzhchiny*). Moscow: Vrem'ia, 2017.)

NR: What do you mean in all of them? We are doing it now in Karelia.³⁸

NP: In Petrozavodsk.³⁹

NR: Near Petrozavodsk. Well, in Petrozavodsk, yes. And, by the way, in December we are going to have a conference on the results. That is, we'll...

NP: Here, in Moscow?

NR: Here, here. We began the research in 2014; we are going to compile and discuss the results for 2014, 2015 and 2016. So...

NP: And then you'll publish it, I'm sure.

NR: Well, of course. Of course, we will publish... So I think this is something that we're doing that's new.

NP: Are these research projects—ours and yours, first of all—having any impact on the women's movement in our country? Or are we on our own, in our ivory tower,⁴⁰ and women and women's organizations, etc. are on their own?

NR: The fact of the matter is that at the first stage, our research had a noticeable impact from the later part of 1980s to the early 1990's. Because all of it was new. Second, I would say, there was a huge influx of people from the West; and third, because of the money... funding came from there.⁴¹ And it did not go to waste! So much has been done by ordinary people out of their interests at the grassroots on the level of education, and sometimes partly in scholarship. Studies were conducted, discussions, even dissertations... What were some of them? But anyways, there were many theses and dissertations. There were these centers. So many women advocacy centers were organized then.

NP: In other words, our research became the impetus for the creation of..

NR: Very much so. Very much so. This book here was published in 1996; about five years after the creation of the Laboratory on Gender Issues... and it indicates the extent to which gender research, gender theories were finding their direction and have developed – that much was done. They definitely roused...

³⁸ The Republic of Karelia is a federal subject of Russia. It is located in northwest Russia and borders Finland. ("Republic of Karelia." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Karelia Accessed October 17, 2019.)

³⁹ Petrozavodsk is the capital of the Republic of Karelia, a territory of the Russian Federation that borders with Finland.

⁴⁰ "The ivory tower" is an expression that originates in the Biblical Song of Solomon, and since the 19th century has been used to describe academic environments and intellectual goals that are disconnected with the practical concerns of everyday life. (Definition, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ivory%20tower>, accessed August 2017).

⁴¹ Western countries provided funds to Russia after the post-soviet period after 1992 in an attempt to promote democratic and free-market institutions. (Menges, Constantine C. "An Initial Assessment of U.S. Aid to Russia, 1992–1995 And a Strategy for More Effective Assistance." https://www2.gwu.edu/~ieresgwu/assets/docs/demokratizatsiya%20archive/04-04_menges.pdf.)

NP: Society.

NR: Society, yes, roused it. Then in the aughts, when new coalitions came to power, , they didn't want to know or understand these things. They didn't need any of it.

NP: What do you think? Did research on gender progress so quickly—publications, for example, really took off and became more sophisticated in the 1990s—thanks to financial aid from the West?

NR: No, I think, it was to a large extent because people were interested in a new look at society. This new way of looking at society—I already mentioned this—new terminology,, new evaluations of relationships in society.

NP: Why can't we motivate and engage our youth with this material now? Why were we so attracted to it in the '90s and why we did we feel it was so important for certain issues, personal, scholarly, professional, women's, and whatever, while contemporary youths relate to it so coldly?

NR: I think that the mindset is already changing.

NP: Society's.

NR: Yes. The mindset is changing in society. Now our youth wants it all and doesn't want to wait. It's a well-known fact. You know Natal'ia Vinokurova, right?

NP: Of course.

NR: Well, she carried out a study assessing the activity of young scholars. Yes, yes, yes. This next generation really depresses me!

But I live—I mentioned before—a peaceful and quiet life because it's all in my past. Nothing is really new for me, except fatherhood, but I'd say that...

NP: And was fatherhood your idea? Where did the idea about fatherhood come from?

NR: No, this idea came from the States. They carried out the project - the findings were in the report, the presentation... *Fatherhood in the Contemporary World*...

NP: But Russia was not there.

NR: No. And now we are working on Russia. Fatherhood in Russia. But, you know, this is, undoubtedly, a new step, fatherhood, and so on; possibly, because, to a large extent, our young people are changing direction now... Because those who wanted—wanted it all and didn't want to wait—they've already left. And those who stayed, they understand that wanting it all with waiting is unrealistic. But these new directions don't exhaust the importance of scholarship and research for the future.

By the way, I was in touch with Posadskaia all the time, and with Natal'ia Zakharova, especially. And all the time the latter told me: "gender, why gender?" So what we're going through now is no different than the discourse at the beginning of the first decade of the 21st century... She would tell me, "Natal'ia, how come they have it there every year, all countries come and talk, and in Russia it's as if it doesn't exist..." I would tell

her, "Absolutely, but those aren't my goals, they're not my issues." I am interested most of all in progress in scholarship. I think that current progress is found most in the subject of fatherhood. Although I read that World report, the one on fatherhood around the world – the report tagline is gender relations. And this tagline is repeated throughout the report like a refrain. At every sub-topic and at every conclusion. This is an issue of gender issue that's not going away. You can't hide from it.

NP: How can we... well, what do you think... I agree with you by the way. How can we make our research more understandable for members of women's organizations, for the women's movement, how can we get closer to those who implement policies for those for whom we are writing all of this? Because otherwise we are writing it for ourselves alone, for our own professional community. How can we reach outside of these boundaries and popularize our interests?

NR: It's a problem. It's a problem of changing people's mindsets. Everything that happens in society...

NP: But with this neoconservative⁴² turn in the early aughts, how can we reach people? The '90s were one thing – we had different goals and for that reason we could... and in our research we saw that the neoconservatives could change the mentality of the youth, of the students to whom we read lectures. But now when every television screen, every show, every talk by a public intellectual repeat these conservative views that like the work of woman is her family. And these things, through various means, are reinforced in films—feature films I mean—in literature and so on. With all this, it's very difficult to impose or, let's use a different word, to present a different point of view.

NR: Only with the power of knowledge and science. Nothing else will work.

NP: You believe that science can win out? That it is capable of...

NR: I believe. I believe. It's just I've seen a lot in my time, a lot. Though the more we try to predict, the more complicated predications become. And I should tell you that we made a particular discovery that was not accepted by everyone as a discovery. But according to what we found, if you look at the health of men and women, it's well known that men live less and women live longer. But I call that strategic health. I differentiate it from tactical health, a kind of health that you can observe at equal levels in both men and women at age 30. What's the difference between the sexes as you move forward in time? There is health of women and men at 40, 50, 60 years of age. As it turns out,

⁴² Neoconservatism is a political ideology characterized by a dislike of political radicalism, among other things. The idea of changing the structure of a society that views women as caretakers and emphasizing the role that men hold in the home is a radical belief that is not supported by neoconservative thinkers. Vladimir Putin's leadership since 1999 further promoted the ideas of conservative social and cultural policies that make it difficult for the feminist movement to grow in Russia. ("Conservatism." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservatism#Modern_conservatism_in_different_countries Accessed November 6, 2019.)

tactical health (defined as health that depends on age) - today is worse in women than in men.

NP: Why?

NR: We have many biological and social factors here. And so...

NP: I'm sorry, which one?

NR: For instance, biological factors are factors which define the role of women in the population. Women maintain their population, their numbers. And in that sense, women are supposed to be more resistant. Such are the biological factors. But social factors are there too, and the social factors are that a man leads a particular, not so much a lifestyle, but rather is measured by his fulfillment of a social stereotype. That is, he is employed in worse situations, he has a responsibility to care for his family, he exchanges his health for income. Transforms his health into income. This is different from the situation in the West, where, for instance... In the West, for instance, when income is transformed into health. And here...

NP: They spend their health...

NR: Yes! In order to... In order to... This was especially evident and clear in the 1990's. That's why, when they complain today, "why are women retiring at age 55 and men at 60", then... I have already spoken and written all kinds of texts about this criticism in which I argue that we can't change this now. Because if women's work life is extended and their retirement age is postponed, nothing will be gained: she will get sick and die even faster than a man. Yes, in Russia, she is organized and educated in the best possible way. I don't mean by comparison to other countries. But having women spend more time in the workforce - it's just not going to work out. We will have higher rates of disability; they're already very high today. And it would be still higher. And maybe...

NP: If the retirement age for women is increased?

NR: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. That's what I mean.

NP: So this is not going resolve any social problems?

NR: The situation will be worse from all points of view.⁴³

⁴³ NR's commentary here is prescient of events that took place two years after the interview. On June 16, 2018, Russian Prime Minister Dmitrii Medvedev introduced legislation to raise the retirement age of men and women from 60 and 55 to 65 and 63 respectively. President Putin later changed the proposed retirement age of women to 60. Putin signed the legislation into law on October 3, 2018. The speed with which the legislation was passed drew numerous protests and negative critical reactions. Cities across the Russian Federation saw street protests, while critics accused the Russian government of manipulating data and outright lying about an increase in life expectancy that necessitated the changes. See "Законопроект о пенсионной реформе в России (2018)," in *Википедия*, May 6, 2019, [https://ru.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=%D0%97%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%82_%D0%BE_%D0%BF%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%B8%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B9_%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%84%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BC%D0%B5_%D0%B2_%D0%A0%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%81%D0%B8%D0%B8_\(2018\)&oldid=99626852](https://ru.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=%D0%97%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%82_%D0%BE_%D0%BF%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%B8%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B9_%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%84%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BC%D0%B5_%D0%B2_%D0%A0%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%81%D0%B8%D0%B8_(2018)&oldid=99626852).

NP: Well, in this sense our projects have certainly had an impact on society, and on the issues that society is addressing. Do you believe that the work of the Laboratory on Gender Issues was connected to the women's movement in our country?

NR: Of course, how could it be otherwise? Other laboratories later sprouted up like mushrooms. Yes, yes, yes. In all cities. And we talked and had joint projects.

NP: But in the early 2000's, as a result of transformations in the political life of the country, the number of these centers reduced, and many of them closed... If you know about this, what do you think is at its core? Is it the lack of interest in the topic, the lack of funding? Which...?

NR: Both. Both. This process has its place. The women's organizations... their number is decreasing. Was decreasing and is decreasing now.

NP: But your laboratory maintains its staffing levels, those that it did 20 years ago?

NR: Yes, if it hasn't increased them.

NP: They've even increased.

NR: Because now we have a new project with Karelia. And we there... Family, family and gender, domestic violence.

NP: You have largely economists and demographers working together on this?

NR: Yes, yes, yes, yes. Possibly sociologists. I'm not sure... just a few.

NP: Are you getting any financing from Russian foundations?

NR: No, no, no.

NP: Only foreign foundations.

NR: Foreign ones, yes.

NP: That is, the commissioner of the project is another country. Not ours.

NR: No, of course not. They didn't commission it so much as they wanted to compare.

NP: If they included you in the project, that means they commissioned it.

NR: Maybe. Maybe so. But they just want to compare what's happening here, in the United States, in England, and so on. Where... where all this... As you know, now all kinds of these topics are fashionable, for example: what is happiness.

NP: How it's understood in different...

NR: yes, in different countries... But it's difficult to get funding for that here.

NP: So in our project: we would like to compare how we understand feminism and whether we understand it or not, and consider it understandable and familiar. Do you think that Western women's organizations have any ties to similar types of

research, say, like your current project in Petrozavodsk? Or your past project “Taganrog”? That is, women's organizations in other countries, have they been interested in the results of your research?

NR: We haven't had any contacts for a while. No, no. For a long, long time we haven't had contacts.

NP: Only in the '90s.

NR: Yes, only in the nineties, during perestroika, there was some activity. Partly, you know, Raisa Gorbacheva,⁴⁴ she made a contribution to the situation, and interacted with me...

NP: And what contacts do you have with academic organizations now? In connection with the project on fatherhood?

NR: On fatherhood? There is an organization SIDA.⁴⁵ It's a foundation in Sweden. I don't know their whole domain, but they...

NP: This is the one that brings demographers together?

NR: No, no, it's just...They partly finance these projects. Not just our projects, but also a project in St. Petersburg⁴⁶ somewhere... I don't know exactly. I can't... You know, like... it's just age...

NP: How many people do you have working on the project on fatherhood?

NR: Not many. Let me think. Maybe—well, in the laboratory— we have about 4 people involved with the project. And in Karelia there's another three who are organizers, are there too. But that's the field, and fieldwork requires particular work, a higher number of people...

NP: And your job there is to conduct research, write a report, translate it into English, and...

NR: And submit it.

NP: And submit it.

NR: And submit it. Yes, yes, yes. But I don't know. We'll see...

⁴⁴ Raisa Gorbacheva (1932-1999) was the wife of Soviet leader and politician, Mikhail Gorbachev. She dedicated much of her time to Soviet public life and children's health. ("The International Non-Governmental foundation for socio-economic and political studies (The Gorbachev Foundation) - Raisa Gorbacheva - Biography." Горбачев Фонд. Accessed March 05, 2018. [http://www.gorby.ru/en/gorbacheva/biography/.](http://www.gorby.ru/en/gorbacheva/biography/))

⁴⁵ One percent of Sweden's annual budget is delegated to SIDA, an organization that helps the inhabitants of developing countries gain economic and social opportunities in world markets. ("About Swedish development cooperation." Sida. Accessed March 05, 2018. [https://www.sida.se/English/how-we-work/about-swedish-development-cooperation/.](https://www.sida.se/English/how-we-work/about-swedish-development-cooperation/))

⁴⁶ Saint Petersburg is Russia's second-largest city, with 5 million inhabitants in 2012. ("Saint Petersburg." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Petersburg Accessed October 17, 2019.)

NP: And so there's no goal to find practical solutions for some issue? It's only research, right?

NR: Only research, what practical recommendations could there be...?

NP: Were there any projects like that during the existence of the Laboratory on Gender Issues? Projects that led to practice, project in which they expected you to provide specific recommendations to resolve particular issues.

NR: How could there not have been?! Let's see... perhaps on the basis of political decisions? On what basis would they be accepted? They would have to get energy from somewhere! We conducted the research they asked for, of course. But they ... you know, there is a huge gap between "I'll get it for you!" to "here it is!". You know that it's one thing to come up with something, to find a basis, to advance the idea... And the decision based on that research is another thing as it turns out...

NP: I had just one last thing I'd like to discuss. It's a question of the men in your family, Aleksey and your sons: do they share your interest in gender studies, etc.?

NR: No, no, no, no, no, no.

NP: Well, did you want to discuss it with them...

NR: No, never. I didn't really involve them much in my scholarly life, so to speak. It's complicated...

NP: It's complicated.

NR: It's complicated, yes.

NP: And your students? Do they think that they are obligated to popularize the results of the studies that they are working on in their research projects? Are they bringing them to a wider audience?

NR: I don't know. The thing is, gender after all... has found itself positioned in such a way... in time. And at every stage, there was progress, in a sense, or goals, or something like it. But as we change, and as we age, our research projects are changing too, oddly enough. I saw this... Recently we conducted the last "Taganrog" in 2014. And now we organized the fieldwork there, and summarized all of it, and we'll publish too. But it wasn't simple. First, it wasn't simple to conduct the fieldwork. Second, it was difficult to analyze. Those who had participated earlier, they aren't there, and others are further [[away]], so we had challenges. But it's alright. I think that, we managed to do it anyway, and this year we would like and hope to get a grant to publish the last "Taganrog." I mean "last" figuratively, of course.

NP: And in this project you again have comparison of the lives of men and women within the context of family and professional...

NR: Yes, of course. Yes, yes.

NP: That's good, that's important. And how is similar research on Russia received in the West? Most importantly, in America, because it's usually them who pay for that research?

NR: Honestly, I haven't been there in a while. Everything I know is mostly through Natal'ia who was at the UN. At those UN conferences. I know partly through Anastasia as well; she's there too, at that Center, which was organized, you know, at the UN. UN Women.⁴⁷ But, honestly, I don't pay too much...

NP: As a researcher.

NR: Attention to it. Although I always say that we can't completely abstract ourselves from the scholarship of the rest of the world. It's impossible, we are living in a global society.

NP: But maintaining contact is difficult?

NR: Difficult, yes.

NP: And for that reason many say that the '90s were easier and now everything's become much more complicated

NR: Muchmore complicated. Yes.

NP: But are you nevertheless optimistic about the future? Will the subject of gender be interesting in the future? What do you think?

NR: In my opinion, we just need to find some direction. We're at crossroads, and we need to find a new direction. I think that...

NP: So because you sense that there are some new subjects, what do you think might be relevant in the near future as we continue our research on gender?

NR: What might be...

NP: What might be interesting?

NR: In general, I have high hopes for the subject of "gender and health." Because I think that we are just in such a pit... in the sense that we need to find how... Well, right now I'm not sure how...

NP: How we might combine our work with valeology,⁴⁸ with a general theory of health?

NR: Yes, yes, with health. Yes, yes, yes! Now I am absorbed by it, by this fatherhood. Because this is real – this fatherhood. And it might be the most important thing, you

⁴⁷ UN Women is a UN organization dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls around the world by providing leadership opportunities, increasing women's empowerment, confronting violence against women, and incorporating women into the peacemaking process. ("About UN Women." UN Women. Accessed March 05, 2018. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/about-un-women>.)

⁴⁸ Valeology is the study of healthy living. ("Valeology." Valeology - Wiktionary. Accessed March 05, 2018. <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/valeology>.)

know. We are now organizing a conference, and in December – we already have Lakhova as a speaker.⁴⁹

NP: It means that this topic interests top political circles.

NR: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. For a while, Lakhova was silent in our circle, we hadn't heard anything from her. And now she showed up and wants to actively participate. I think it's not a coincidence. Not a coincidence.

NP: It's not a coincidence, but we haven't yet seen a call for paper from your, from this conference.

NR: We haven't done that yet.

NP: As soon as the information is available, we at our Institute of Anthropology and Ethnology⁵⁰ would be happy to take part....

NR: I think that we will certainly do it and invite because I am the chair of the committee, you know, something on gender, I don't remember what. So we have an excuse to meet up and see each other again.

NP: Thank you so much, Natal'ia, for your interview today!

NR: Yes, yes, yes.

⁴⁹ Ekaterina Lakhova is a Russian politician and in 2016 she served as the chairwoman of the Women's Union of Russia, and member of the Federation Council Committee for the Federal System, Regional Policy, Local Governance and Affairs in the North., (Interview by Vladimir Nesterov. Exclusively for Vestnik Kavkaza. "Ekaterina Lakhova: "A woman is designed so that she can save family, peace, Russia"." Vestnik Kavkaza. Accessed March 05, 2018. <http://vestnikkavkaza.net/interviews/Ekaterina-Lakhova-%E2%80%9CA-woman-is-designed-so-that-she-can-save-family-peace-Russia%E2%80%9D.html>.)

⁵⁰ The Institute of Anthropology and Ethnology is a research institution based in Moscow that operates in the History branch of the Russia Academy of Sciences. Their work specializes in "ethnographic studies of cultural and physical anthropology." ("Institute of Anthropology and Ethnography." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institute_of_Anthropology_and_Ethnography Accessed November 6, 2019.)