“Shining a Light” on Us and Them: Public-Making in Ordinary Russia

Maria Sidorkina

Ab Imperio, 2/2015, pp. 209-251 (Article)

Published by Ab Imperio
DOI: 10.1353/imp.2015.0053

Maria SIDORKINA

"SHINING A LIGHT" ON US AND THEM: PUBLIC-MAKING IN ORDINARY RUSSIA*

On an especially cold, windy day in March, I made my way out of the subway, past Novosibirsk's most expensive supermarket and European luxury retailers, to an empty, snow-covered plaza in front of a massive Soviet-era library. I thought I had arrived too late for the protest in honor of a nineteen-year-old girl named Nina Shestakova, who had been killed in a car accident involving an intoxicated traffic police officer, Alexei Mozgo. As I approached, however, I saw that just enough people were there, at the edge of the packed snowfield, to resemble a group. Local activists (*obshchestvenniki*) and journalists were waiting for sound amplification to begin the protest, which was to conclude in a car rally through the city. The generator would not start, so the speakers remained to the side, unplugged. The planned stage was nowhere in sight. Those waiting were chatting casually by their cars, indifferent to the bitter cold, and to the event itself. The cars, in contrast, exhibited colorful signs that declared the meeting's purpose with a less casual air: "We're sick of lawlessness!" (*Zadolbal bespredel!*) and "Mozgo is evading responsibility" (*Mozgo – ukhodit ot otvetsvennosti*).

A circle of people eventually formed to listen to Nina's mother, a friend, and a local activist, Dmitrii Babin, who had been "in a situation similar" to Nina's. Babin's heartfelt testimony took up the passionate tone of the car

* I am grateful to Doug Rogers, two anonymous reviewers, and especially to Neringa Klumbytė for patiently guiding the revision of this article at various stages.

posters. And, as the line of cars drove out into the city, and news reports proliferated, the humble gathering revealed a more potent significance. Novosibirsk residents honked at the sight of the caravan, helping to amplify its message.[1] The nightly news declared that the unfavorable conditions for the gathering only rendered vivid activists' personal involvement and dedication to the fight for justice.[2] Finally, in comment after comment, ordinary newsreaders attested to the activists' efforts and recognized each other's involvement.[3]

Nina was run over by a Honda Civic while standing at a bus stop, on the night of January 2, 2013. According to the initial police report, the wife of a police officer had been the one behind the wheel, but switched seats with her husband just after the accident took place. At the time of the protest, the identity of the driver was in dispute between representatives of the Novosibirsk public (*obshchestvennost'*) and the city's investigative committee. To those gathered at the meeting, justice meant that police officer Alexei Mozgo would be indicted as the culprit in the fatality, and receive an appropriate prison term. The March protest action was part of a longer mobilization effort that unfolded between January 2013 and August 2014.

Resonance or Noise? The Case of Russian Public Opinion

What ideas and practices do Russians today draw upon to mobilize public opinion in the struggle against the corrupt "system" (*sistema*) of police officials? The audit of the investigation into Nina's death by the Novosibirsk public is illustrative as a success story. After several months of contention, the city's "investigative committee" (*sledstvennyi komitet*) changed its version of what happened at the scene of the crime, and indicted Alexei Mozgo as the culprit in the killing. Mozgo was found guilty of Nina's death in June 2014, and the verdict was upheld on his appeal. Who or what was responsible for this reversal of fortune for Mozgo? There are many vehicle-related fatalities in Novosibirsk, as well as cases of police officers

[1] Comment by Vladimir to "Supruzheskii dolg," February 10, 2013 // http://news.ngs.ru/comments/967667/#c4460022. Last visit for all sites, unless otherwise mentioned: November 1, 2014.

[2] Ocherednuiu aktsiiu pamiati Niny Shestakovoi proveli v Novosibirske // Novosti. GTRK Novosibirsk. 2013. March 11. http://novosibirsk.rfn.ru/rnews.html?id=222021.

[3] On Novosibirk's largest news platform, News.ngs.ru, commentaries about the investigation at times consisted of several hundred comments per article, over the course of several articles. There were 45,000 readings of just one story about Mozgo's investigation, out of a total 49 stories between January and May 2013.

shielded from answering for their crimes by their "position in society."[4] Did small-scale performances of public protest,[5] such as the one described above, contribute to this unexpected outcome, making Nina's case "the most resonant investigation of 2013?"[6]

The study of public speech, and the frames it affords for collective action, has been central to scholarship on postsocialist Russia and Eastern Europe. Legacies of the truly "alternate modernity"[7] of the Soviet Union have provided scholars with ample opportunities to explore why some social conditions afford "a sense of self-organization through mass-mediated discourse to be construed as politically efficacious," and others do not.[8] Many researchers have contended that Russia does not, and may never have had the social conditions to enable the kind of public opinion that would enable political collective agency for its citizens.[9] Scholars looking for signs of a Russian "public sphere" that would fit liberal political models have, instead, discovered citizens' withdrawal from this form of imaginary.[10] Others have proposed alternative frameworks for Russian collective belonging, centered on kinds of sociability that the "public sphere" has historically been defined against, and that many people therefore do

[4] Nachal'niki pokryvaiut podchinennykh // News.ngs.ru. 2010. October 20. http://news.ngs.ru/more/74789/.

[5] Though the number of participants at protests rarely exceeded a couple of dozen people, this level of activity was sufficient to maintain "resonance." As noted by Alexei Mazur, a social activist and political correspondent who covered Nina's story, it was not important what people said at those meetings, or whether there were 20 or 200 gathered; rather the photos and slogans that would subsequently circulate would suffice to keep the story "in the spotlight." Alexei Mazur, Activist and Tayga.info Political Correspondent. Interview by Maria Sidorkina. March 3, 2013.

[6] Shtel'max: "Delo Mozgo — eto piatno na GIBDD i vsekh nashikh deistviiakh" // Tayga.info. 2014. January 29. http://tayga.info/news/2014/01/29/~115322.

[7] Paul Manning. Semiotics of Drink and Drinking. London and New York, 2012. P. 29. On socialist modernity as both familiar and strange, see also: Susan Gal. A Semiotics of the Public/Private Distinction // Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies. 2002. Vol. 13. No. 1. Pp. 77-95.

[8] Francis Cody. Publics and Politics // Annual Review of Anthropology. 2011. Vol. 40. No. 1. P. 43.

[9] For instance, media pundit Masha Gessen, a regular *New York Times* contributor, has repeatedly made the claim that Russia has no public opinion or public conversation. See, for instance: Charlie Rose. Masha Gessen // PBS. 2012. March 6. http://www.charlierose.com/watch/60046624. For a scholarly perspective, see Oleg Kharkhordin (Ed.). Ot obshchestvennogo k publichnomu. St. Petersburg, 2011.

[10] Jürgen Habermas. The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society. Cambridge, MA. 1991.

not consider "political."[11] However, several recent studies have sought to amend the empirical record of Russian political participation and challenge conventional accounts of a "passive" Russian public.[12] For example, Graeme Robertson has argued that contentious activism has been significant in the past two decades, and that the quality of organizing that took place in the "Fair Elections" movement of 2011–13 represents continuity with long-term Russian political trends, rather than a departure.[13]

Novosibirsk residents discussing the investigation into Nina's death shared concerns about Russian citizens' ability to self-organize and effect change as publics. They offered competing theories, online and offline, of the impact made by Novosibirsk's *obshchestvennost'* on Mozgo's conviction.[14] At times, activists and ordinary newsreaders took "public opinion" (*obshchestvennoe mnenie*) seriously. As one online commentator summarized the impact of the activist effort: the goal of getting to the truth "would have been unachievable using solely … legal measures."[15] At other times, discussion participants doubted the public's existence, and lamented that Mozgo's indictment was the exception that proved the rule of lawlessness (*bespredel*): those in power would continue to oppress ordinary folk.[16] While some read-

[11] As one Russian media expert summarizes: "You can find impassioned, angry Russians citizens who use the Internet to aggregate and fight for their rights, but these rights are not generally defined in broad philosophical terms or even in terms that many people would consider 'political.'" Sarah Oates. Revolution Stalled: The Political Limits of the Internet in the Post-Soviet Sphere. Oxford, 2013. P. 3.

[12] Alfred B. Evans, Jr. Introduction: Civil Society in Contemporary Russia // Communist and Post-Communist Studies. 2012. Vol. 45. Pp. 217-218.

[13] Graeme B. Robertson. The Politics of Protest in Hybrid Regimes: Managing Dissent in Post-Communist Russia. Cambridge, 2010; Graeme Robertson. Russian Protesters: Not Optimistic But Here to Stay // Russian Analytical Digest. 2012. No. 115. Pp. 2-4.

[14] When translating the term *obshchestvennost'* into English one is faced with a dilemma. Is this a public of active, educated citizens (perhaps an activist counterpublic) or the (general) public? If it is the former then what term stands for the latter? Obshchestvo (society) does not contain the nuances of "public" that we are familiar with from the Republican tradition. I will use *obshchestvennost'* as my informants did, to shift between these two meanings of "public," depending on context.

[15] Real'naia. Comment to "Chastitsy inspektora Mozgo" // News.ngs.ru. 2013. June 4. http://news.ngs.ru/comments/1182667/.

[16] A comment exemplary of the genre: "I snova – vse vse vidiat, vse vse ponimaiut, est" vse dokazatel'stva – no vse vyidut sukhimi iz vody, potomu chto est' te, kto mozhet kupit' chto ugodno – pravdu, sovest', sledstvie. V kakoi strane zhivem. Chto eti avtoprobegi? Chto oni dali, na chto eto vse rasschityvalos'? Na obshchestvennyi rezonans? Kha. Pobukhteli i zabyli. v sleduiushchem godu pereizberut to zhe rukovodstvo goroda, potom togo zhe samogo prezidenta i dudet vse kak prezhde – u kogo den'gi i sviazi – tot zhivet. U kogo nichego – tot terpit." Comment by fu gost (June 4, 2013 01:31) // Ibid.

ers saw public opinion as the "noise" of a crowd (*shumikha*), and claimed that opinion was the domain of experts rather than ordinary people, others protested that they were not a crowd but ordinary residents in the pursuit of the truth.[17] Yet, in Novosibirsk, as in other contexts of social contention recently examined in Russia, there was no evidence of participants giving up or convincing others that their efforts were meaningless.[18] In online conversations, stances of cynical withdrawal from "public opinion" appeared in only a minority of the comments. Rather, a strong current of voices expressed earnest identification:[19] people recognized the goals of public involvement as seeking truth and justice, and applauded the effort of mobilization.[20] Of course, the possibility of sincere uptake from the Novosibirsk public was presupposed by Nina's family, friends, journalists, activists, lawyers, government representatives, and ordinary newsreaders who helped "shine a light" on the events of the accident (*osveshchat' sobytiia)*. This loose network of supporters relied on and helped to create the social conditions for the case of Alexei Mozgo to become "publicly resonant" (*poluchit' obshchestvennyĭ rezonans*), and, ultimately, for the kind of opinion that could oversee a just legal verdict. Though Mozgo continues to deny responsibility for Nina's death, the Novosibirsk *obshchestvennost'* considers the verdict its victory. Whether justice is served at the end of this long process of contention, public opinion – as the victims' family lawyer put it – has served justice.

---

[17] The dangers some readers saw in an electrification of *obshchestvennost'* were much like those in other countries: *Shumikha* or the noise of mob rule, trial in the wrong court, or according to hate rather than the law. However, these dangers were voiced by a vast minority of online contributors; moreover, such comments tended to have large, negative rankings from commentators. They were frequently challenged by comments such as: "Blagodaria tak nazyvaemoi Vami 'Tolpe' pravda vostorzhestvovala. Iznachal'no vse svodilos' k fal'sifikatsii, a teper' blagodaria ZhITELIaM NOVOSIBIRSKA i ne tol'ko vse vstanet na svoi mesta." Vnimatel'nyi gost'. Comment to "Aleksei Mozgo prosidit pod arestom do serediny leta" // http://news.ngs.ru/comments/1623308/.

[18] Oates. Revolution Stalled . P. 160. Also see: Robertson. Russian Protesters.

[19] I surveyed comments on all relevant articles on local news sites, and activist social media discussion threads, including News.ngs.ru, Taiga.info, and Vkontakte groups of involved organizations, such as "The Blue Buckets." (http://vk.com/ru_vederko?w=wall-23944101_7907)

[20] For example, "One can achieve an objective investigation only if one really tries" (*Dobit'sia ob"ektivnogo rassledovaniia mozhno tol'ko sil'no postaravshis'*); "The people need the truth" (*Narodu nuzhna Pravda*); we need to "reign in the authorities" (*naiti upravl[u] na vlast'*); you "are fighting for the truth;" (*vy dobivaetes' pravdy*); and "truth triumphed" (*pravda vostozhestvovala*). The soul is warmed by "hope for justice and the end of lawlessness" (*dushu greet nadezhda na spravedlivost' i konets bespredela*).

The dynamics of social contention I consider in this case study suggest that Russia today has the social conditions for politically efficacious publics. In my analysis, I identify several strategies of "public-making" that take these conditions into account,[21] to conjure a collective subject and "call out" to the constituencies that could give this subject legitimacy. The communicative styles I attend to are embedded in local histories of activism and resonate with what we know about protest dynamics in Russia today. Drawing on literature that has urged thinking outside normative paradigms of the public sphere, I consider these "technologies of persuasion" as indicative of neither liberal nor "illiberal" regimes of textual circulation.[22] Instead, I suggest, that as in the liberal models of stranger sociability, public-making in Novosibirsk presupposed a moral common sense, joint attention to a space of common discourse, and openness to potential strangers. However, it also required a different kind of political performance. In addition to addressing potential strangers, activists had to persuade the potentially immoral "them" to set aside particular social interests and recognize their shared footing with "us" with respect to self-evident actualities.

I rely on the analytical tools of linguistic anthropology to trace the social logic of public-making within an order of public interaction.[23] To do this, I focus on a single public address made by the activist Dmitrii Babin at the protest in March. I have chosen his speech because I have been able to trace its "intertextual" links with local histories of mobilization and wider discourse of state critique,[24] by using data from mass and social media

[21] I use "public-making" to highlight the contingent and performative aspects of social imaginaries, as well as their dependence on material "technologies of persuasion" and media circulation. See: Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar and Elizabeth A. Povinelli. Technologies of Public Forms: Circulation, Transfiguration, Recognition // Public Culture. 2003. Vol. 15. Pp. 385-397.

[22] For a brief discussion of "illiberal" and other labels used to describe regimes that do not "live up to full democratic standards," see: Robertson. The Politics of Protest in Hybrid Regimes. P. 6.

[23] In particular, I am thinking about the "indexical" design of language forms that concretize arrangements of people, rely on them, and create them. Michael Silverstein. Talking Politics: The Substance of Style from Abe to "W." Chicago, 2003; Idem. Metapragmatic Discourse and Metapragmatic Function // Reflexive Language: Reported Speech and Metapragmatics. Cambridge, 1993.

[24] On the importance of intertextuality to public-making, see: Michael Warner. Publics and Counterpublics // Public Culture. 2002. Vol. 14. No. 1. Pp. 49-90. As Warner notes: "It's the way texts circulate, and become the basis for further representations, that convinces us that publics have activity and duration. A text, to have a public, must continue to circulate through time, and because this can be confirmed only through an intertextual environment of citation and implication, all publics are intertextual, even intergeneric." Ibid. P. 68.

discussions, activist interviews, and participant observation of Novosibirsk public life. My goal is to contribute to the area literature a thick description of a communicative process in Russia that presupposes and entails political collective agency. I suggest that increased ethnographic attention to ordinary citizens' earnest involvement in public life would not only contextualize the strategies of withdrawal scrupulously documented by anthropologists but also dispel illusions of an antidemocractic "cultural syndrome" in postsocialist societies.[25]

Postsocialist Publics and Politics: The Rhetorics of Withdrawal

Although Russian models of public life developed in dialogue with European thought, "publika," as an equivalent of the English or French "public," was never naturalized within meta-discourse about public subjectivities and the imagined communities to which these belonged.[26] *Obshchestvennost'* accrued its own intellectual and social history, evading easy parallels with the Western "public sphere" as conceptualized by Habermas and his interlocutors.[27] Yet, when discussing the role of "public opinion" in Russia, rarely do scholars pay adequate attention to the positive traditions associated with *obshchestvennost'*. Because the liberal "public sphere" as conceptualized by Habermas remains the normal or unmarked form in political theory, Russian *obshchestvennost'* has been marked as a deformed or failed public. It is not a token of the type that arose in Europe on the heels of the Enlightenment: not quite modern, not properly deliberative, and only seemingly democratic. Scholars have tended to see Russian participation in a sphere of common discourse as "passive" rather than active;[28] a "public–private" hybrid rather than a pure type meeting the "modernity standard set by Weber";[29] or a pro

[25] Jessica Greenberg. "There's Nothing Anyone Can Do about It": Participation, Apathy, and "Successful" Democratic Transition in Postsocialist Serbia // Slavic Review. 2010. Vol. 69. Pp. 41-64. See also: Douglas Rogers. Community, Symbolic Order, and the Exclusion of the Social in Serguei Oushakine's The Patriotism of Despair // Ab Imperio. 2011. Vol. 12. No. 1. Pp. 247-261.

[26] For an account of the roots of the mismatch, see: Kharkhordin. Ot obshchestvennogo k publichnomu. See also: Vadim Volkov. Obshchestvennost': zabytaia praktika grazhdanskogo obshchestva // Pro et Contra. 1997. No. 2. Pp. 77-92.

[27] Habermas. The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. See also: Cody. Publics and Politics; Craig J. Calhoun (Ed.). Habermas and the Public Sphere. Cambridge, MA, 1992; Michael Warner. The Letters of the Republic. Cambridge, MA, 1990.

[28] Oates. Revolution Stalled . P. 17

[29] Ingrid Oswald and Viktor Voronkov. The "Public–Private" Sphere in Soviet and Post-Soviet Society Perception and Dynamics of "Public" and "Private" in Contemporary Russia //

forma performance of "virtual politics" and "political theater" rather than a space for sincere deliberation.[30]

In turn, studies of postsocialist Russian society have focused on ordinary citizens' depoliticization, disengagement, and distrust toward institutions of public life. These terms have remained in wide use, despite major transformations in the organizational ecology of Russian protest movements since perestroika.[31] Many studies of Russian everyday life have attended to practices outside the domain of the public – that is, "forms of social interaction that publics have been defined against"[32] – including discourses of soul, private consumption, friendship, family bonds, personal networks, violence, and informal governance.[33] Certainly, scholars have also investigated forms of postsocialist Russian politically minded talk. Yet, empirical attention has focused mainly on talk that exhibits *withdrawal* from political collective action.

For example, Olga Shevchenko, in her analysis of late 1990s Moscow public discourse, traced the workings of a "skeptical postsocialist sensibility" that inhibited collective action, and lead to a "cultivation of mental

---

European Societies. 2004. Vol. 6. Pp. 97-117; Alena Ledeneva. From Russia with Blat: Can Informal Networks Help Modernize Russia // Social Research. 2009. Vol. 76. P. 259.

[30] James Richter. Putin and the Public Chamber // Post-Soviet Affairs. 2009. Vol. 25. Pp. 39-65; Andrew Wilson. Virtual Politics: Faking Democracy in the Post-Soviet World. New Haven, 2005. These are just some of many explicit and implicit scholarly diagnoses of the failure of the Russian public sphere.

[31] These terms returned to analysts' repertoires after the waning of the 2011–2012 "Fair Elections" movement. Though I cannot offer a broad survey of Russian mass and oppositional media, please see the following accounts of widely circulating perceptions of the protest movements' "failure": Artemy Magun. The Russian Protest Movement of 2011–2012 // Stasis. 2014. Vol. 2. Pp. 160-191; Ilya Budraitskis. The Weakest Link of Managed Democracy // South Atlantic Quarterly. 2014. Vol. 113. Pp. 169-185; Laboratory of Public Sociology. Where Is the Movement Going: The Identity of Russian Protest 2011–2012 // LeftEast. http://www.criticatac.ro/lefteast/where-is-the-movement-going-russian-protest-2011-2012/. Last visited: January 23, 2015.

[32] Cody. Publics and Politics. P. 37. Cody briefly reviews the history of discussions of forms of social interaction that publics have been defined against, such as: the "private" sphere, identified with women and children; politics driven by communal affect; and politics defined by "pressure from the street."

[33] Oleg Kharkhordin. The Politics of Friendship // Unraveling Ties: From Social Cohesion to New Practices of Connectedness. Frankfurt Am Main, 2002. Pp. 75-98; Alena V. Ledeneva. How Russia Really Works: The Informal Practices That Shaped Post-Soviet Politics and Business. Ithaca, 2006; Jennifer Patico. Consumption and Social Change in a Post-Soviet Middle Class. Stanford, 2008; Dale Pesmen. Russia and Soul: An Exploration. Ithaca, 2000; Vadim Volkov. Violent Entrepreneurs: The Use of Force in the Making of Russian Capitalism. Ithaca, 2002.

and emotional autonomy from politics."[34] Shevchenko discussed the shared skills and structures of everyday knowledge that enabled people to figure a "private stance" to performatively signal individual control over situations. People's competence in performing "Russian-style" autonomy, she noted, reproduced civic withdrawal and avoidance of power representative of late socialism. In sum, Shevchenko found that widely shared stances of withdrawal inhibited Russians' self-recognition as a public-like group, predicating collective identity on disengagement from political action.[35] This was because to challenge or criticize the order of things, she observes, "would explicitly contradict *the very rules* that structured postsocialist Russian political talk."[36] That is, Shevchenko subtly argued (echoing Habermas's argument about the bourgeois public sphere, but to opposite ends) that the communicative pragmatics of Russian public discussion determined that Russian citizens "inadvertently passed on the chance to change the conditions they bemoaned."[37]

Other ethnographic studies of postsocialist Russia, conducted between the early 1990s and late 2000s, retained an empirical and theoretical focus on ordinary "genres" or "rules" of talk that similarly conditioned stances of withdrawal from collective action.[38] Scholars attended to Russians' "rhetorical ability to assert autonomy," and the "redirection of political dissatisfaction to self-transformation"[39]; or, alternatively, to developing biopolitical ("basic" and "cultural") forms of collective belonging.[40] Those anthropologists who

[34] Olga Shevchenko. Crisis and the Everyday in Postsocialist Moscow. Bloomington, 2008. Pp. 144, 169.

[35] "A group here was seen not as a miniature model of society at large (as is often the assumption in much of the sociological literature), but as an entity that was opposed to it." Ibid. P. 168.

[36] Ibid. Emphasis added.

[37] Ibid. P. 170.

[38] Nancy Ries. Russian Talk: Culture and Conversation during Perestroika. Ithaca, 1997; Pesmen. Russia and Soul; Natalia Roudakova. From the Fourth Estate to the Second Oldest Profession: Russia's Journalists in Search of Their Public after Socialism / Ph.D. Dissertation; Stanford University, 2007.

[39] Shevchenko. Crisis and the Everyday in Postsocialist Moscow. P. 85; Tomas Matza. Moscow's Echo: Technologies of the Self, Publics, and Politics on the Russian Talk Show // Cultural Anthropology. 2009. Vol. 24. P. 394.

[40] Shevchenko's claims are echoed in Oushakine's work on 1990s Barnaul, a Siberian town in the Altai region. He observed that many of his informants experienced "discursive disenfranchisement" when they were unwilling or unable to join in the new public conversations celebrating monetized exchanges, liberal ideology, and the global circulation of capital. As a result, people resorted to "basic premises of long-term interaction."

turned their attention to ordinary political and social organization focused on expertise-driven activism, explicitly encouraged by the state,[41] or noncontentious social work driven by self-improvement and careerism.[42]

As Jessica Greenberg points out, the prevalence of terms diagnosing a political culture of withdrawal in postsocialist Eastern Europe appeared as a result of a "culturalist turn" among democracy promoters; that is, the replacement of process- and procedure-oriented projects with ones focused on transforming citizens' behaviors and practices.[43] Actors aligned with democratization goals saw "pro-democratic" culture as one that creates horizontal ties of "participation, active cooperation, deliberation, and reciprocal trust."[44] In contrast, postsocialist citizens' mentalities, behaviors, and sensibilities were diagnosed as not properly "pro-democratic." The implication of such a diagnosis, Greenberg observes, is that any failures of democracy lie with citizens' failure to understand and embrace the way democracy works (their culture) rather than with democratization programs, and the social and economic inequalities they helped reproduce. Greenberg's work cautions us against seeing talk of political "nonparticipation" as a sign of failure, rather than a feature of how postsocialist citizens live and practice democracy. Her intervention is in line with critiques voiced by anthropologists of a tendency to view "culture as culprit" of postsocialist nations' failures to develop participatory government.[45] Greenberg's concept of productive "nonparticipation" suggests (as did Alexei Yurchak's earlier notion of "performative shift"[46]), that specific types of disengagement from

---

Serguei Oushakine. The Patriotism of Despair. Ithaca, 2009. P. 11. That is, Oushakine observed forms of relatedness based on biopolitical (rather than political) categories, such as kinship, blood, soil, traumatic experience, and shared pain. Ibid. P. 112.

[41] Suvi Salmenniemi. Struggling for Citizenship // Demokratizatsiya. 2010. Vol. 18. Pp. 309-328.

[42] Julie D. Hemment. Nashi, Youth Voluntarism and Potemkin NGOs: Making Sense of Civil Society in Post-Soviet Russia // Slavic Review. 2012. Vol. 71. Pp. 234-260.

[43] Greenberg. "There's Nothing Anyone Can Do about It." P. 50.

[44] Ibid.

[45] As Doug Rogers noted, the warning about taking "culture as culprit" of perpetual Russian "failure" sounds regularly within postsocialist anthropology. Rogers. Community, Symbolic Order, and the Exclusion of the Social. P. 256.

[46] Yurchak's notion of "performative shift" accomplished critical work similar to Greenberg's "non-participation." He challenged the conventional wisdom that attributed cynicism and falsity to late socialist public life, demonstrating that just because citizens' public speech acts did not fit liberal models did not mean they were not productive of collectivity. Rather, the collectivities "performed" through late socialist public address were not defined by its literal referents ("Soviet toilers"). Instead, public discourse institutionally

the liberal pragmatics of the public sphere can be a political and social good. Yet, by retaining an ethnographic focus on practices ("nonparticipation") that have served as a negative foil for public sphere norms ("participation"), Greenberg refocuses discussion on rhetorical withdrawal.

Ordinary Activism in Postsocialist Russia

In the context of post-Soviet Russia, the "public culture of withdrawal" myth has been challenged by empirical studies of citizens' earnest involvement in political collective action. Consider, for example, that in the second half of the 1990s (when Shevchenko's fieldwork took place) there was a "wave of strikes, demonstrations, hunger strikes, and blockages that was among the largest in the post-Communist world."[47] Though comparing levels of activism across nations is very difficult, scholars also suggest that encounters with activism around concrete issues fundamental to Russian society are an increasingly common feature of social life for ordinary people.[48] Yet, what do we know about strategies activists use to build public pressure in postsocialist Russia?

Several scholars have searched for sincere engagement in socialist and postsocialist public culture as a historical affordance, rather than a fleeting characteristic of opposition movements.[49] However, there has been relatively little empirical research on post-1991 mobilization. Scholars who work with survey data have concluded that the "stubborn persistence" of political protests in Russia since 1991 – despite efforts to yoke these into the service of the state – is often overlooked.[50] Beyond international headlines that

enabled communities of *svoi*, or "people like us," autonomous from the state. Yurchak reiterated, however, that neither late-socialist official discourse, nor the sociability of *svoi* produced "publics" or "counterpublics." Alexei Yurchak. Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation. Princeton, 2006.

[47] Robertson. The Politics of Protest in Hybrid Regimes. P. 41.

[48] Evans. Introduction.

[49] See, for instance, Yurchak's extensive discussion of sincerity's place in "normal" late socialist people's embrace of communist ideals. For additional considerations of sincerity, see, among others: Sheila Fitzpatrick. Supplicants and Citizens: Public Letter-Writing in Soviet Russia in the 1930s // Slavic Review. 1996. Vol. 55. Pp. 78-105; Kevin M. F. Platt and Benjamin Nathans. Socialist in Form, Indeterminate in Content: The Ins and Outs of Late Soviet Culture // Ab Imperio. 2011. Vol. 12. No. 2. Pp. 301-324; Paul Manning. Rose-Colored Glasses? Color Revolutions and Cartoon Chaos in Postsocialist Georgia // Cultural Anthropology. 2007. Vol. 22. Pp. 171-213.

[50] Graeme B. Robertson. Managing Society: Protest, Civil Society, and Regime in Putin's Russia // Slavic Review. 2009. P. 537; Robertson. Russian Protesters.

focus on anti-state activism, there are numerous examples of social groups successfully building public pressure around issues such as the rights of automobile drivers, environmental problems, car tariffs, pension benefits, owners' rights, public health, provision and cost of municipal services, accountability of regional leadership, and urban planning.[51]

Novosibirsk, the site of my case study, has seen activism on all of these issues as well as on the issue of "police/juridical self-rule" (*politseiskii, pravovoi proizvol*) or "lawlessness" (*bespredel*). Organizing against police *proizvol* is especially interesting, however, because, as Gilles Favarel-Garrigues has observed, the genre of police critique has become very accessible in Russia today, and is one of the few that projects social unanimity.[52] Public critique of police peaked nationally in 2009 as a result of a number of high-profile investigations, and citizens "speaking out" against police corruption.[53] Ordinary citizens, rather than experts, have claimed the right to publicize their complaints. People are eager not only to demand their right to fair treatment but also to connect their vision for the police with a more general vision of the common good.[54]

Representative strategies of these types of contention, of which police critique is one example, include a focus on concrete problems rather than abstract rights, and a rebuke to authorities that have "exceeded the bounds of decency."[55] The commonalities between diverse activist efforts are not a coincidence. Russian protests that recruited many participants and attracted the national media have served as examples for other groups, "encouraging

[51] For an overview of nationally resonant cases in the past two decades, see Alfred B. Evans Jr. Protests and Civil Society in Russia: The Struggle for the Khimki Forest // Communist and Post-Communist Studies. 2012. No. 3-4. Pp. 233-242; Robertson. Managing Society.

[52] Police critique has been a permanent feature of political debates in Russia since the early 1980s, when, along with more general criticism directed toward bureaucrats, it was used to produce consensus and political legitimacy for the state. However, during the Soviet and early post-Soviet years, most people preferred to deal with police problems through private channels. Gilles Favarel-Garrigues. Usual Suspect? Police on Trial in Russia // Complaints: Cultures of Grievance in Eastern Europe and Eurasia. Conference proceedings: Princeton, 2013. http://culturesofgrievance.wordpress.com.

[53] Brian D. Taylor. Police Reform in Russia // Post-Soviet Affairs. 2014. Vol. 30. Pp. 226-255. Taylor's research suggests that public attention to police activity resulted in police reform, although the reform is not seen as having resolved deep-seated issues.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Critique based on "exceeding the bounds of decency" ties social rights-based activism with the "Fair Elections" movement, when it drew people outraged at the lack of decency exposed by explicit voter fraud. Oates. Revolution Stalled. P. 167.

them to use similar methods of asserting their demands."[56] Indeed, contrary to established expectations of "media cynicism," the Russian mass media have been a crucial catalyst for this kind of activism.[57] Yet, what does this space of mass-mediated interaction look like in Russia, and what are its "rules of talk?" Perhaps the expectation has been that when Russian people sincerely appeal to one another on topics of public interest, they project a social world much like the liberal one. As a result, whereas we have detailed descriptions of forms of self-organization that Russians are withdrawing *to* (personal networks, self-improvement), we have yet to learn about what they are withdrawing *from*.

Unbundling the "Public Sphere"

Critiques of liberal-centric accounts of socialist and postsocialist political culture (such as those by Greenberg and Yurchak, noted above) resonate with a larger body of anthropological literature that has analyzed varieties of "alternatively modern" public life.[58] Much work has suggested that, contra Habermas, there is no single "form of communication specific to a public," the lack of which entails the disintegration of some totality that could be hypostasized as "the public sphere."[59] Rather, new theoretical concerns have prompted dispensing with this construct for the sake of the more flexible and pluralizable concept of "publics": "large-scale political subjects that become thinkable and practicable by means of mass-mediated

---

[56] Evans. Protests and Civil Society in Russia.

[57] Widespread cynicism toward the media has consistently been identified as one reason for the failure of the Russian public sphere. On the other hand, as Roudakova writes, journalists distrust state officials and their own publics, calling them *bydlo* and *pipl khavaet*. Western scholars see this mutual mistrust as a derailing of the media's democratizing potential. Roudakova. From the Fourth Estate to the Second Oldest Profession. As Oates writes: "from a distance, Russia provides a communications paradox in that there is so much information and so little democracy." Oates. Revolution Stalled. P. 12.

[58] Dilip Gaonkar. Alternative Modernities. Durham, 2001.

[59] Habermas. The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. P. 175. For critiques, see: Cody. Publics and Politics; Asif Agha. Large and Small Scale Forms of Personhood // Language and Communication. 2011. Vol. 31. Pp. 171-180; Idem. Meet Mediatization // Language and Communication. 2011. Vol. 31. Pp. 163-170; Benjamin Lee and Edward LiPuma. Cultures of Circulation: The Imaginations of Modernity // Public Culture. 2002. Vol. 14. Pp. 191-213. Francis Cody. Daily Wires and Daily Blossoms: Cultivating Regimes of Circulation in Tamil India's Newspaper Revolution // Journal of Linguistic Anthropology. 2009. Vol. 19. Pp. 286-309.

communication."[60] Though publics have been rethought, they have remained relevant to understanding the social conditions that allow for an indefinite number of social strangers to self-organize in a way that can be construed as politically efficacious. To that end, some features identified with the peculiar potency of these forms of stranger sociability remain salient, namely: address to strangers, self-organization through discourse, and membership through mere attention.[61]

A public is a specifically "modern" form due to its dependence on mass-mediation.[62] As Michael Warner observes, the minimal condition for a public is "joint attention" to circulating texts (written or otherwise), based on at least partially agentive participation. A public created by joint attention is a contingent relation, perpetually "at risk" of losing members, while remaining open to new members from the entirety of the social imaginary.[63] Publics must be regularly invoked and performed anew.[64] Members of publics must be aware of the circulation of texts (themselves reflexive about bringing a public into being) among indefinite addressees, and *recognize* themselves as addressed by those texts.[65] Another important aspect of publics is that, if performatively effective, they are able to create the "foundations" of their own legitimacy.[66] Bourgeois publics did this by appealing to the rational opinion of "a people" in distinction from a state. At the time, "public opin-

[60] Cody. Publics and Politics. P. 47. The adjective "public," in turn, is used to qualify forms entailed by mass-mediated, and commoditized "regimes of circulation" of texts and ideas (e.g., public subjectivity).

[61] Warner. Publics and Counterpublics.

[62] Charles Taylor. Modern Social Imaginaries. Durham, 2004. From now on, I will use "modern" in Taylor's sense: to refer to a set of features of social organization that marked Euro-American modernity, as well as to redactions of this set of features seen as central to some "alternative modernities". "Mass mediation" implies the circulation of texts structured by a continuous and "homogeneous" temporality; relations of intertextuality; and commoditization. See: Agha. Meet Mediatization; Benedict Anderson. Imagined Communities. London, 2006; Lee and LiPuma. Cultures of Circulation.

[63] Warner. Publics and Counterpublics.

[64] Asif Agha. Recombinant Selves in Mass Mediated Spacetime // Language and Communication. 2007. Vol. 27. Pp. 320-335; Debra Spitulnik Vidali. Millennial Encounters with Mainstream Television News // Journal of Linguistic Anthropology. 2010. Vol. 20. Pp. 372-388; Silverstein. Talking Politics.

[65] Anderson. Imagined Communities; Taylor. Modern Social Imaginaries; Benjamin Lee. Talking Heads: Language, Metalanguage, and the Semiotics of Subjectivity. Durham, 1997.

[66] Performative speech acts, such as those that can bring a public into being, work by linking the utterance of certain words to specific circumstances of utterance. In the absence of these circumstances, performatives misfire, and do not achieve the desired effect. In other words, publics must fulfill the "felicity conditions" for their realization. (Ibid.)

ion" emerged as "the organizing trope of the intergeneric tension field that [bourgeois] forms of publicity were creating."[67] The production of "public opinion" made publics political.[68] It is because publics did not require transcendent forms of authority for their legitimacy that they have remained of interest to theorists of participatory democracy.

Theorists of the liberal public sphere have often emphasized that the production of public opinion is dependent on specific communicative pragmatics; for instance, presuppositions of individual intentionality, sincerity, and responsibility.[69] (Because of these terms' ethically normative valence, I have chosen to simply avoid using them in this article.[70]) Anthropologists have done much to relativize the universalist clams of these Euro-American institutional and intellectual trajectories and associated language ideologies.[71] Furthermore, scholars of modern public culture have described values that

"Felicity conditions" play a role in assessing the use of performatives similar to that played by truth conditions with respect to truth-functional (constantive) uses of language. John Austin. How to Do Things with Words. Cambridge, MA, 1975.

[67] Cody. Publics and Politics. P. 44; Lee. Talking Heads. P. 342.

[68] That is, if politics is seen as located in the production of an opinion able to give collectivities agency at the level of the state, rather than in procedures and processes of voting, poll-taking, and so on. Note that "public sphere," in turn, can be defined as those "contexts from which is projected the imagined *background of opinion* that has become necessary to the modern social imaginary." Michael Warner. Liberalism and the Cultural Studies Imagination: A Comment on John Frow // Yale Journal of Criticism. 2000. Vol. 12. Pp. 431-433.

[69] For an articulation of this assumption, see: Jürgen Habermas. On the Pragmatics of Communication. Cambridge, 2000. Sincerity, intentionality, and related communicative values were central to the ethical narrative of European modernity, which centered on the emergence of a free, clear-speaking subject. Webb Keane. Christian Moderns: Freedom and Fetish in the Mission Encounter. Berkeley, 2007. It is these values, closely tied to bourgeois language ideologies, that are commonly seen as decentered by late-socialist and postsocialist rhetorical withdrawal. See, for example, Yurchak; Alaina Lemon. Dealing Emotional Blows // Language and Communication. 2004. Vol. 24. Pp. 313-337.

[70] A discussion of the role of "sincerity," "intentionality," "rationality," and so forth, in Russian language ideologies is outside the scope of this article. For my purposes, it is not necessary to determine whether words are in fact transparent representations of beliefs to suggest effective uses of the trope of, for example, "earnestly authored words." See Robin Shoaps. "Pray Earnestly": The Textual Construction of Personal Involvement in Pentecostal Prayer and Song // Journal of Linguistic Anthropology. 2002. Vol. 12. Pp. 34-71.

[71] Richard Bauman and Charles L. Briggs. Voices of Modernity: Language Ideologies and the Politics of Inequality. Cambridge, 2003; Bernard Bate. Tamil Oratory and the Dravidian Aesthetic: Democratic Practice in South India. New York, 2013; Patrick Eisenlohr. Little India: Diaspora, Time, and Ethnolinguistic Belonging in Hindu Mauritius. Berkeley, 2006; Charles Hirschkind. The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Opinion: Interanimating Registers in Malagasy Kabary Oratory and Political Cartooning // Journal of Linguistic Anthropology. 2008. Vol. 18. Pp. 214-235.

did not become dominant within those historical trajectories, but rather coevolved with them.[72] In my analysis, I build on this work to suggest that many of the presuppositions of earnest public address in Russia are shared with the liberal citizenship paradigm. Yet, the stylistic particularities of earnest speech addressed to mass audiences point to differences in the kind of "political work" required to make publics effective.

Technologies of Public-Making in Novosibirsk

Sound amplification did not get worked out at the protest I attended, but two dozen activists and journalists easily formed a small circle. There were phones, cameras and other recording devices pointed at anyone making comments, ready to circulate utterances across social and mass media. Of all the speakers, only Dmitrii Babin appealed to us with something that had the formal qualities of a "speech." Against the background of a "storm of public discussion" about the tragedy.[73] Babin passionately called on people to get together, to demand that Alexei Mozgo face the consequences of his actions, and to compel the authorities to stop ignoring the police cover-up. The style of Babin's "speech" turned out to be important to the event. When organizers promoted the gathering's status as a *miting*,[74] they presupposed amplification, a stage, and verbal address characterized as the "public expression of public opinion" (*publichnoe vyrazhenie obshchestvennogo mneniia*). Since the other conditions remained unfulfilled, it was Babin's contribution that became key to regimenting the March event as a *miting* type.

---

[72] See, for example, the range of contributions in Calhoun. Habermas and the Public Sphere. And the overview in Cody. Publics and Politics.

[73] The March 10 meeting took place just after the timeline for the inquiry was extended in light of accusations of a cover-up, but before Mozgo, rather than his wife, became the suspect. It was also just three weeks after the release of a video of an investigative "experiment," in which the testimony given by the police officer and his wife was tested for validity by local journalists (in a car identical to the one that killed Nina, they attempted to switch seats in less than five seconds). The social media circulation of this video, coupled with the public release of the video of the investigative committee's own experiment, in which the actual suspects successfully switched seats in five seconds, increased popular discontent with the investigation. Novosibirtsy Avtoprobegom privlekli vnimanie k rassledovaniiu DTP, v kotorom pogibla devushka // Vesti Novosibirsk. 2013. January 14. http://tinyurl.com/NSKTV-Avtoprobeg.

[74] A miting is officially defined as the "mass presence of citizens in a specific location for the public expression of public opinion about pressing problems of a mainly social-political character." Federal'nyi zakon "O sobraniiakh, mitingakh, demonstratsiiakh, shestviiakh i piketirovaniiakh." 2004 // http://constitution.garant.ru/act/right/12135831/chapter/1/#block_203.

By circulating quotations from this speech to potential strangers, journalists, in turn, affirmed not only the publicness of Babin's address but also the gathering's status as a media-worthy event.[75] Babin's text was featured on activist Web sites, and the regional political news portal Tayga.info chose to cite it in their headline for a story about the March protest: "'People, how long will you stand for this?' Novosibirsk Residents Organized a Third Street Action to Honor the Memory of Nina Shestakova." A part of Babin's speech also appeared on the nightly news (Channel 1, GTRK Novosibirsk).[76] (Below I include excerpts featured in the news reports. See the Appendix for the full transcript.)

Table 1.

5	Я сам попал в такую же ситуацию,	I myself was in a similar situation, but
6	только я выжил. Я на условном сроке.	I survived. I am on probation.
[...]		
47	Был, я уверен на сто процентов, я смо-	It was, I am one hundred percent sure, I
48	трел, отслеживал ситуацию, я уверен	watched, kept track of this situation, I am
49	на сто процентов что был сотрудник	one hundred percent sure that it was a po-
50	милиции. Уверен на все сто. Как так, у	lice officer [driving]. One hundred percent
51	него хватает совести подставить свою ...	sure. How could he stoop so low so as to set
52	не знаю жена или супруга.	up his... I don't know his wife or spouse...
53	А если бы сидела *мать* на его месте...	And what if his *mother* was sitting
54	вместо его супруги? Он бы тоже свою	[next to him] rather than his spouse? He
55	мать продал ради своих погон?	would sell out his own mother for the
56	Я не знаю, ради чего – ради *зарплаты*,	sake of his *epaulets*?
57	ради *кредитов*?	I don't know, for what – for his salary,
58	Я уверен даже что автомобиль на котором	his *loans*?
59	он двигался, я не знаю обстоятельств	I am even sure that the car transporting
60	дела... он оформлен либо на матерь,	him, I do not know the circumstances
61	либо еще где-то.	of the case... it is registered either to his
62	До каких пор это будет продолжаться?	mother, or elsewhere.
		How long will this keep happening?

[75] For Novosibirsk activists, a *miting* carries the potential for more street-level disruption, and correspondingly, media-level frisson. In general, official permission for a *miting* is more difficult to obtain than for a *piket*, for instance, in which participants are allowed to exhibit "visual forms of agitation," but must not broadcast sound. See the regimentation of public gatherings by the Russian Constitution. Ibid.

[76] Ocherednuiu aktsiiu pamiati Niny Shestakovoi proveli v Novosibirske; Alexei Mazur. "Liudi, do kakix por vy budete eto terpet'?" Novosibirtsy proveli tret'iu aktsiiu pamiati Niny Shestakovoi // Tayga.info. March 10, 2013. http://tayga.info/details/2013/03/10/~111807; Andrei Terekhin. Oni govoriat, chto oni – za poriadok. Pochemu zhe poriadka net s ikh storony? // Reformatsiia, obshchestvenno-politicheskoe dvizhenie. 2013. March 12. http://reformations.ru/?p=2682.

[…]		
73	И вот с *этой* ситуацией, это *вопиющая*	And with *this* situation, this is an *outra-*
74	ситуация...	*geous* situation...
75	Я не знаю, нужно *собираться* как-то... не	I don't know, we must *get together*... don't
76	знаю, нужно *разговаривать* с людьми,	know, [we] must *talk* with people, write
77	*писать*, в конце концов, писать в *Москву*,	[letters], in the end, *write* to *Moscow*, *fight*
78	*добиваться* справедливости.	for justice.
79	Люди, до каких *пор* вы будете это	People, how *long* will you stand for
80	терпеть?	this?
81	*Произвол* со стороны сотрудников	This *lawlessness* on the part of police
82	милиции которые *с вас тянут деньги*,	officers who *draw money from you*,
83	*тянут налоги*, за что?	*draw taxes*, for what?
84	За что... *мы* им платим?	What do *we*... pay them for?
85	За то что бы они убивали наших детей?	To kill our children?
86	Это *как*, объясните мне? …	*How* is that, explain [this] to me?...
87	Я не могу, у меня просто эмоции…	I can't, I just have [been overcome with]
	извините меня, извините…	emotions… excuse me, I'm sorry…

What made Babin's speech so readily mediatizable – that is, a type of text that journalists and activists found useful in drawing attention to their efforts? At the same time as this speech was taken up by the media, it incorporated the concerns of a wider Novosibirsk "public," if we take such a public to recognize itself in the audience of televised evening news, in the readers and commentators on the Novosibirsk online news platform NGS.ru,[77] as well as in Novosibirsk representatives of civil society (*obshchestvenniki*, *predstaviteli obshchestvennosti*).

Although Babin was invited to speak by an activist, he himself was an "active citizen" (*aktivnyi gorozhanin*), rather than someone affiliated with an organized movement. Babin had been invited because, first and foremost, he had been in a "situation similar" (5) to Nina's when he encountered police *bespredel* three years earlier.[78] At that moment, Dmitri Babin had been a very ordinary person by all accounts. He claimed this status himself by noting that he spoke "as a citizen of Russia" (*kak grazhdanin Rossii*), and as "a humble man" (*ia chelovek malen'kii*).[79] He was also derisively described as a "village bumpkin" (*kolkhozan*) by online commentators.[80] As

[77] NGS.ru truly has a "mass" readership. Cf. 3.

[78] Number in parentheses indicates the line in the transcript of Babin's speech in the table and in the Appendix.

[79] See Babin's speech of August 26, 2010. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=blu2y9ZIUIM.

[80] "Gospodi, kakoi zhe kolkhozan! S ego 'to est" oni daleko ne uidut, khotelos' by eshche na ego edinomyshlennikov posmotret'! Iurist blin, vchera eshche butylki sobiral i sdaval

one journalist put it, the media's determination to keep Nina's story in the spotlight was partly a result of what had happened to Babin: although his case made a lot of noise, the public forgot about him, and he was convicted of assaulting his shooter, a police officer.[81]

Because Babin's familiarity with Nina's case was as a member of the public, rather than as an insider or an expert, his speech recycled many elements of the investigation that had already appeared in articles and news forum conversations. Significantly, however, Babin's strategies of engaging public opinion had been shaped by two years of his own struggle against *bespredel.* After his own encounter with police corruption, Babin had collaborated with diverse local activists to record YouTube statements, speak out at meetings, and organize a center of legal aid for people who had experienced unfair police treatment.[82] This experience of making public appeals took place in the context of years of activism and media attention to police corruption at local and national[83] levels. Thus, Babin's capacity to shape the March protest as a "public" event was, in turn, shaped by earlier contexts of public address.

The embeddedness of Babin's speech in the local culture of political communication motivated the journalists' reception, as well as my choice of this performance as an exemplary act of public-making. As already noted, the difference between "public" and "behind the scenes" action was a categorically salient one for Novosibirsk residents.[84] And while qualita-

---

segodnia iuristom stal..." Comment by Timur Ivanov, 2012 // https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnR2kpuB_hU.

[81] In 2010, Babin was shot with rubber bullets by an officer under circumstances that remained controversial. At that time, his story had made it to the local news, and was the pretext for several public meetings. Alexei Mazur, Activist and Tayga.info Political Correspondent. Interview. March 3, 2013.

[82] Vystrel v spinu // News.ngs.ru. 2010. July 27. http://news.ngs.ru/more/69065/. See also Babin's YouTube address about a consultancy for victims of police *proizvol*: Dmitrij Babin Continues the Fight // https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnR2kpuB_hU.

[83] Contention around lawlessness by activist groups and ordinary in Novosibirsk included local groups such as "For Human Rights," "Mothers of the Unfairly Convicted," the political movement Solidarity, and many sympathetic activists across the political and social spectrum. Participants had organized protests, posted YouTube videos, invited representatives of the authorities to roundtable discussions, petitioned state bodies for information, and consolidated around the passing of legislation to elect a human rights ombudsman in the region (see Nachal'niki pokryvaiut podchinennykh). As noted, this contention culminated in the reform of 2009–2011 (Taylor. Police Reform in Russia).

[84] As noted in the introduction, the existence and efficacy of public opinion was testified to by mass and activist media, local and national public figures, as well as ordinary

tively different organizing by private individuals undoubtedly took place in response to this case of lawlessness, few attributed Mozgo's indictment to the insider efforts of a single group of powerful people.[85] I consider what Novosibirsk residents understood by "public" action, however, not by aggregating opinions about public opinion, culled from online comments or private conversations. Accordingly, I read Babin's performance not as the direct transmission of his private, interior states, but rather as a turn in a public, interactive discussion.[86]

In the following sections, I attend to several rhetorical strategies used by Babin that also appeared across contexts of public discussion of the investigation; that is, those that enabled Babin to demarcate a socially legible position on police *bespredel*. In parallel, I illustrate how his performance was in fact an instance of "public-making" talk in the service of organizing collective action to audit state authority, insofar as it fits into familiar outlines of public address (outlined in the previous section). I describe, in turn, how Babin demarcates an earnest public stance; conjures a collectivity of potential strangers; legitimates this collective subject by securing the recognition of those who share sensory and moral dispositions; and urges potentially immoral interlocutors to recognize their common social obligations.

---

newsreaders, as noted above. Yet, many participants in public discussions had to contend with voices attributing the outcome of the investigation and trial to informal or internal decision-making processes and pressures. For example, were the parties responsible for the favorable outcome merely representing corporate or hidden interests, or doing someone's dirty work to tarnish a public official's reputation? Here is one example of this version of events: "Sud pokazhet to, chto budet resheno v tishi kabinetnykh peregovorov prokuratury i predsedatelia suda (t.k. delo vyshlo rezonansnym). … Ochen' udivitel'no, chto eto tak vdrug gorodskaia kollegiia advokatov (da eshche i na bezvozmezdnoi osnove) za pravdu bit'sia stala? Sdaetsia, chto real'naia tsel' – 'podpilit' kreslo pod nekotorymi nachal'nikami." Igor' Mungalov. Comment to "Miting i avtoprobeg pamiati Niny Shestakovoi proidut v Novosibirske 10 marta"// Tayga.info. 2013. March 10. http://tayga.info/news/2013/03/07/~111789.

[85] According to Alexei Mazur, a journalist and social activist deeply involved with this investigation, something qualitatively different did occur in this case of intervention by the public. This was something that did not happen in other contexts of "public discussion" – that is, a small group of journalists decided to take "real" steps to solve a problem, rather than just talk about it. (Alexei Mazur, Activist and Tayga.info Political Correspondent. Interview by Maria Sidorkina, March 3, 2013.)

[86] Shoaps. "Moral Irony": Moral Particles, Moral Persons and Indirect Stance-Taking in Sakapultek Discourse.

The Rhetoric of Earnest Involvement

One aspect of Babin's March address that echoed the many earnest voices in online discussions of Nina's death was his foregrounding of personal involvement in the public mobilization effort. Although these voices collectively demonstrated the robustness of the earnest public-making genre, looking closely at Babin's affect allows us to unpack its social logic. Though the emphatic gestures of Babin's gloveless hands – accentuating the rhythmic prosody of his comments, appealing to his audience, or pointing to the authorities at the city center – did not make it into the TV news camera's frame, textual signs of his emotions were carried to larger audiences (see Table 2).

Table 2.

7	Сейчас **я очень сильно волнуюсь**	Right now **I am very nervous**
36 37 38	Я сейчас, в данный момент я нахожусь на условном сроке... на меня иск. Тем не менее **я пришел на свой страх и риск**	Now, at this moment, I am conditionally sentenced... there is a suit against me. Nevertheless **I have come at my own risk,**
41	И я не знаю, **у меня очень много эмоций**	And I don't know, **I have a lot of emotions**
67	Я **признателен** очень сильно.	I feel very **grateful**.
73 74	И вот с этой ситуацией, это ***вопиющая* ситуация**...	And with this situation, this is an ***outrageous* situation**...
86 87	Я не могу, **у меня просто эмоции**... извините меня, извините...	I can't, **I just have [been overcome with] emotions**... excuse me, I'm sorry...
104 195	Люди, это ***страшно***! Вы поймите, это ***страшно***,	People, this is ***frightening***! You must understand, this is ***frightening***.
125 126	Я не знаю что со мной после этого будет, я *пришел* это сказать.	I don't know what will happen to me after this, I *came* to say this.
131 132 133 134	Я ***искренне*** вам **соболезную**. Держитесь. Я.. Спасибо вам <*hands represent circle of people*> что вы не бросили человека, что вы помогаете ей.	I ***earnestly* feel your pain**, hold on. I... Thank you that you have not abandoned [this] person, that you are helping her.
140 141	Я вижу ее сейчас, и понимаете, мне вот... **Мне за нее больно, обидно**.	I see her now, and [you] understand, I feel... **I feel her pain, her offense**.

Babin stressed "earnestness" (*iskrennost'*) in addressing Nina's mother, and alluded to strong feelings and outrage (103, 73, 104–105, 141). His feelings, he claimed, literally overcame him, and interfered with his ability to speak (7, 86–87). Babin signaled, in other words, "a state of intent so overwhelming and total that there was no room left over for artifice or premeditation."[87] By

[87] Shoaps."Pray Earnestly."

cementing the link between the words he animated and the moment of their utterance, Babin marked his words as "earnestly authored."[88] Babin also stressed his personal responsibility (as principal) for his words: he came to the meeting in order to speak out despite being faced, he underscored, with possible legal repercussions for doing so (36–38, 125–130).

Journalists reporting on the March protest registered Babin's expressive style in their coverage of the event: "Babin … expressed empathy," "Babin's speech … was very emotional," "Babin confessed," "testified," and "expressed gratitude."[89] His earnest style of speaking contrasted clearly with the regional police chief's formal statement about the case that, as readers commented, was neither sincere, nor timely.[90] In sum, Babin projected an affect that was *not* a lack of emotional or cognitive investment in public discourse, identified with late socialism; the "fear, anxiety, disappointment, frustration" of perestroika-era litanies; the cultivation of belonging through trauma narratives recorded in the 1990s; or the "emotional distance from politics" Russian citizens exhibited in the late 1990s and early 2000s.[91] Babin called on people to "get together [and] fight for justice" (75–78), while making vivid his own personal involvement in this struggle.

Public-Making Pronouns: Illuminating an Imaginary of Social Strangers

How do we know that Babin's earnest appeal was not only addressed to the small group of like-minded individuals gathered on the wind-swept plaza but also to the general public? After all, he did not appeal to abstractions such as "the Russian nation" or *narod* ("the people") to group his addressees into a social totality. Instead, Babin used shifters such as "people" (*liudi*), "we" (*my*), you plural or "you all" (*vy*), "everyone" (*vse*), that could stand for any group, copresent or abstract, to map out the kind of public that could successfully call for justice (see Table 3).

---

[88] Ibid.

[89] Mazur. Liudi, do kakix por vy budete eto terpet'?

[90] For example,"Uvazhaemyi gospodin Shtel'makh lichno ia ne veriu ni edinomu Vashemu slovu, a uzh o iskrennosti voobshche pomolchu." Comment by nesoglasnaia, January 29, 2014; "nado bylo zhdat' god ... chtob dat' kommentarii" Vadium VI, January 29, 2014 // http://news.ngs.ru/comments/1634228/.

[91] As noted by Yurchak. Everything Was Forever; Ries. Russian Talk; Oushakine. The Patriotism of Despair; Shevchenko. Crisis and the Everyday, respectively.

Table 3.

25 26	**Все** же видели как они ездили по Шашлычной	[But] **everyone** saw how [the police] drove about on Shashlychnaia
64 65 66	Но ***люди***, я остался тогда один... Вот, **общественность** нет помогла в первое время.	But ***people***, I was left then all alone... No, [here] **the public** helped a lot at first.
75 76	Я не знаю, **нужно *собираться*** как-то ... не знаю, нужно ***разговаривать*** с **людьми**,	I don't know, **we must *get together***... don't know, [we] must ***talk*** with **people**, write
79	**Люди**, до каких *пор* **вы** будете это терпеть?	**People**, how *long* will **you** stand for this?
83	За что... ***мы*** им платим? *<rise in volume>*	What do ***we***... pay them for?
99 100 101 102 103 104 105	Куда смотрит **общественность**? Куда смотрят депутаты? Куда смотрит в конце концов городское управление? *Куда*? **Люди**, это *страшно*! **Вы** поймите, это *страшно*.	Whereto **the public** is looking? Whereto the representatives are looking? Whereto, in the end, is the city administration looking? *Whereto*? **People**, this is *frightening*! **You** must understand, this is *frightening*
110 111 112	И это сплошь и рядом, это коснутся может **любого**! **Вы** можете идти по улице, **вас** остановят...	And this [happens] time and again (right in our back yard), this can touch **anyone**! **You** may be walking down the street, **you** will be stopped...
117 118	Но тем не менее, **вы** посмотрите что они творят.	But nevertheless, **you** just look at what they are doing.
123	**Люди**! …	**People**!...
132 133 134	Спасибо **вам** *<hands represent circle of people>* что **вы** не бросили человека, что **вы** помогаете ей.	Thank **you** that **you** have not abandoned [this] person, that **you** are helping her.
142 143	Куда **все** *смот-рят*… Все, я сказал, спасибо.	Where to is **everyone** *look-ing*?... That's it, I said [my piece], thank you.

Over the course of his speech, Babin drew on subtle ambiguity in a chain of "slippery" collective pronouns (and related features of speech) to alternatively pick out and address concrete and indefinite collectivities (e.g., "you," the audience and "you" people).[92] At the same time, Babin used syntactic

[92] Babin used the ability of "slippery pronouns" to shift in reference over the course of their use, and to maintain multiple interpretation at any given time. Shifter elements, such as personal pronouns, verb tenses, and demonstrative pronouns, anchor a speaker's words in the real time of interaction by pointing to the context in which they are used. They also presuppose (or turn "back on themselves"), to refer to an aspect of the context of

parallelism to map these pronouns and the collectivities they projected onto one another. That is, Babin hinted at analogous speaker–addressee relationships linking him "here and now before you" and his face-to-face audience; a not copresent "you" ("we" and "everyone") who had paid taxes, witnessed lawlessness, and so on; and, potentially, "anyone" who might encounter the police by simply by walking down the street.[93] Babin thus indicated that the collectivities he alternately called out (which, at the limit, encompassed potential strangers), were similarly centered on the moment of address, "here and now," when anyone could *see* evidence of the acts of lawlessness to which he referred (whether literally "here and now," or at a point of origin projected by readers from across a distance of space and time).[94]

In this manner, Babin conjured a collectivity of potential strangers, whose gazes aligned with those of the activists (a public of concentric "circles of attention"). Shifting between the different collective pronouns, Babin hinted at a form of authority secured by mutual agreement, rather than by a transcendent power. This was an authority, moreover, that *mattered* to the outcome of the activists' struggle: there was a substantial risk that if it was not realized, Nina's mother and the activists would also be "left all alone."[95] Of course, a successful act of public-making must not only conjure a collective subject but also compel its self-recognition.[96] Babin gave his

---

speaking their very utterance helped create. Danilyn Rutherford. Laughing at Leviathan: Sovereignty and Audience in West Papua. Chicago, 2012.

[93] In his speech, Babin at times uses "you" and "people" to refer to an indeterminate addressee (64, 76, 104, 123). At other times, "you" specifically designates the activist audience that has already stepped up to help Nina's mother (132-134). "You" at other times calls out to the general public, or "the people," a meaning journalists took up by recirculating Babin's question ("People, how long will you stand for this?") in the headline of a news report (79). Finally, "you" can refer to "anyone" who might walk down the street in Russia, and come face to face with police lawlessness (110-112).

[94] Babin began by testifying to his own encounters with lawlessness (5-6); and to that of Nina's situation, the consequences of which were also evident here and now in the presence of her mother (40). He gradually expanded the scope of firsthand witnessing of lawlessness from the moment of his speaking "here and now," to police lawlessness everywhere (25), and, he proposed, potentially anywhere (110-111), so that whenever someone might be listening to his address they would be able witness for themselves the situation to which Babin referred.

[95] Babin claimed he had been "left alone" in the past (64), although initially *obshchestvennost'* (the public) had helped him; and was grateful that Nina's mother was not left alone right here and now (132-134).

[96] In my argument in this section, I draw extensively on dissections of the political work of public-making by linguistic anthropologists, in particular: Lee. Talking Heads. Pp. 321-345.

projected collectivity the quality of an invited inclusive, but he also lent it legitimacy by asserting, for example, that the result of mobilizing people to "get together" was already in evidence.[97] Babin said "thank you" to the activists, and, by analogy, *obshchestvennost'* (64–65), for not leaving Nina's mother alone ("you did not abandon this person … you are helping her," 132–133). In other words, the activists also testified, by their very presence at the protest, that the public had "seen" the acts of lawlessness.

Throughout his speech, Babin also developed an extended visual metaphor that emphasized the "immediate clarity" of "what happened" in the situations of *bespredel* he described.[98] In this way, Babin established the moral rectitude of his and the activists' intentions, and lent further legitimacy to the "public" he projected (see Table 4).

Table 4.

11 12 13 14 15 16 17	Понимаете... **смотрел** даже **видео** сюжет где происходит в автомобиле замена, то есть, пассажира с водителем. Это просто, я ... ну понимаете, **видно**, что ... да это любой следственный... да не реально просто перекинуться просто с места на места. Понимаете...	[You] understand... I even **watched** the **video** story where a switch takes place in the car, that is, of the passenger with the driver. This is, I... well, [you] know, it's **evident**, that... any investigative... it's just not possible [lit. not real] to just hop over from seat to seat. Understand…
23 24 25 26	**Посмотрите** как они ездили по Шалычной… **Все же видели** как они ездили по Шашлычной	**Look at** how they drove around Shashlychnaia [street]... [**You saw that**] everyone **saw** how [the police] drove about on Shashlychnaia
27 28	они **же** калымят, **открыто** калымят, **несмотря на то** что они полиция.	[**it's evident**] they take *kalym* [slang for petty extortion], **open** *kalym*, **regardless** of the fact that they are the police.
42 43	**Куда смотрит** руководство – **Куда смотрит** руководство полицейское?	**Whereto** the leadership **is looking** – **Whereto** the leadership of the police **is looking**?

[97] In fact, throughout, Babin wove together performative and truth-functional (constantive) utterances to add a subtly syllogistic, self-founding quality to his public-making project. For instance, as he pointed to the potential of bringing new collectivities into being ("we must get together") (75-76), he combined the performative potential of this "we" with the general citizenship attribute of "paying" taxes ("my im platim") (83), whose reference point hinged not on the moment Babin was speaking, but on the general state of citizenship.

[98] Jay Fliegelman. Declaring Independence: Jefferson, Natural Language and the Culture of Performance. Stanford, 1993. P. 51.

47 48 49 50	Был, я уверен на сто процентов, я **смотрел, отслеживал** ситуацию, я уверен на сто процентов что был сотрудник милиции.	It was, I am one hundred percent sure, I **watched, kept track** of this situation, I am one hundred percent sure that it was a police officer [driving].
68 69	Вот он **я перед вами**, может быть кто-то меня **не видел** ...	**Here I am before you**, maybe there are some who have **not seen** me...
99 100 101 102 103	**Куда смотрит** общественность? **Куда смотрят** депутаты? **Куда смотрит** в конце концов городское управление? ***Куда***?	**Whereto** the public is looking? **Whereto** the representatives are looking? **Whereto**, in the end, the city administration is looking? ***Whereto***?
107 108 109	Сотрудники милиции убивают ... **среди бела дня**... **среди бела дня** меня расстреляли! Девчонку задавили!	Police officers kill... in **broad daylight**... In **broad daylight** I was shot! They ran over the girl!
110 111	И **это сплошь и рядом**, это коснутся может любого!	And this [happens] time and again [or **right in our back yard**], this can touch anyone!
117 118 119 120 121 122 123	Но тем не менее, **вы посмотрите** что они творят. *Они* говорят что они за порядок. Почему *этого порядка* нет с *их* стороны? **Где власть** .. которая [может] найти *управу* на них? Люди! …	But nevertheless, just **look** at what *they* are doing. *They* say that they stand for order. Then why is there no *order* on *their* side? **Where are the authorities**... that [can] *rein* them in? People!...
130	Но **я *пришел*** сказать это. *<points to the ground in front of him>*	But **I *came*** [**here**] to say this.
135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142	Это уже не [из] принципа... я думаю вот может быть там женщина, там, ну придёт там *<look of disgust>* пальцы заворачивать </>, ну извините за выражение. **Я вижу ее сейчас**, и понимаете, мне вот... Мне за нее больно, обидно. **Куда** все ***смот-рят***?	Now this is not [out of] principle... I think [to myself] maybe some woman, there, well, will come putting on airs [slang], well excuse [me] for [using] this expression. **I see her now**, and [you] understand, I feel... I feel her pain, her offense. **Whereto** is everyone ***look-ing***?

Babin's repeated assertion of the ostensive and, most commonly, visual accessibility of the facts to which he testified suggested the *self-evidence* of police lawlessness. The visual metaphor had other powerful effects, however. The emphasis of the visual sensory modality reiterated the co-engagement of the projected addressees (I, we, everyone, anyone, people) relative to a shared, visible context or "perceptual frame."[99] The "visual"

[99] William F. Hanks. Referential Practice: Language and Lived Space among the Maya. Chicago, 1990.

vehicle also reinforced Babin's status as an "ordinary witness" of corruption (it drew attention to directly perceivable evidence of corruption, rather than facts derived from expert knowledge, overhearing or reports).[100] By foregrounding the visual evidential status of his statements (e.g. 11, 14, 48, etc.),[101] Babin also reinforced his (and his addressees') epistemic and social proximity to "what happened" to Nina (e.g., 140–141). Babin's indication of the "immediate clarity" of police *proizvol* (self-rule) thus allowed him to appeal to the "heart," or shared moral and perceptual sensibilities, as well as to the "head."

Us and Them: The Averted Gaze as Limit to Self-Recognition

More important, Babin's extended visual metaphor also focused attention on the problem of "their" averted gaze (see Table 5).

Table 5.

18 19	Просто **попустительство со стороны** сотрудниками полиции,	[This is] just **connivance on the part** of the police officers,
21 22	Пусть **там** переименовали **их** в полицию, вместо милиции полицией стали.	So **there** [**they**] have changed **their** name to police, instead of *militsia* they became police.
23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	Посмотрите как **они** ездили по Шалычной… Все же видели как **они** ездили по Шашлычной **они** же калымят, **открыто калымят**, **несмотря на то** что они полиция. Так же **они себе позволяют** управлять транспортом в нетрезвом виде.	Look at how **they** drove around Shashlychnaia [street]... [But] everyone saw how **they** drove about on Shashlychnaia [it's evident] **they** take *kalym* [slang for petty extortion], open *kalym*, **regardless** of the fact that **they** are the police. In the same way **they allow themselves** to control vehicles in a drunken state.

[100] Note that the Tayga.info article specified explicitly that Babin "testified" before his audience. In Russian, as in Western trial procedures, "ordinary witnesses," as opposed to expert witnesses, can only testify about firsthand "sensory" experience, due to specific requirements of reliability (these tend to be more rarified versions of society-dominant evidentiary sensibilities). Susan Phillips. Evidentiary Standards for American Trials: Just the Facts // Responsibility and Evidence in Oral Discourse. Cambridge, 1993. Pp. 248-259.

[101] Evidentiality marks the source of information for a proposition. An evidential encodes the epistemological access by a perceiving subject to a particular "state of affairs." Different evidentials, such as the visual, sensory or the inferential, denote different modes of access. Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald. Evidentiality. Oxford, 2004.

42 43 44	**Куда смотрит руководство –** **Куда смотрит руководство** **полицейское**?	**Whereto the leadership is looking –** **Whereto the leadership of the police** **is looking**?
45	Почему прокуратура **не признают**, почему почему?	Why will the investigative committee **not recognize**, why, why?
99	**Куда смотрит** общественность?	**Whereto** the public **is looking**?
100	**Куда смотрят** депутаты?	**Whereto** the representatives **are looking?**
101 102	**Куда смотрит** в конце концов городское управление?	**Whereto**, in the end, the city administration **is looking**?
103	***Куда***?	***Whereto***?
107 108 109	**Сотрудники милиции убивают**... среди бела дня... среди бела дня меня расстреляли! *Девчонку* **задавили**!	**Police officers kill**... in broad daylight... In broad daylight... I was shot [**by them**]! [**They**] **ran over** *the girl*!
112	Вы можете идти по улице, вас **остановят**... *<same gesture in opposite direction, using right hand>*	You may be walking down the street, you will be **stopped** by [them]...
113	Вот эти *люди в погонах* которые... *<pointing "there" towards city center where the authorities are located>*	These *people in epaulets*, who...
119	***Они*** **говорят** что они за порядок.	***They*** **say** that they stand for order.
120	Почему *этого порядка* нет с ***их*** стороны?	Then why is there *no order* on ***their*** side?
121 122	**Где власть** ... которая [может] найти *управу* на **них**</>?	**Where are the authorities**... that [can] *rein* **them** in?
143	Куда все *смот-рят*…	Whereto is everyone *look-ing*…

As the excerpts in Table 5 make clear, Babin exclusively relied on forms of the third person plural "them" (*oni*) to refer to the police, as well as other social actors potentially aligned with these immoral others. (Note that the only time Babin made a gesture of pointing "there," in the direction of the center of the city, rather than directly in front of him, was when he mentioned "these people in epaulets" 112–113.) In the same way that Babin used "you," "we," and "everyone" to map "fractally recursive" circles of attention,[102] he suggested that "they" and "everyone" could collude in an alternative social imaginary, which would not coincide with the engaged activist one. Indeed, the limit to inclusion in the public of "anyone" was drawn by "their" averted gaze. We may be "left all alone," Babin suggested, *because* "everyone" would also refuse to "look."

Babin's play with third-person pronouns and metaphors of spatial and moral distance would sound familiar to any scholar of late Soviet and post-Soviet Russian political talk. This recursive partitioning of social imaginaries

[102] See: Susan Gal. Language Ideologies Compared // Journal of Linguistic Anthropology. 2005. Vol. 15. Pp. 23-37.

has been interpreted to signal withdrawal from political responsibility – one that operates by grouping people into "us" (*svoi*, people like us, private networks, biopolitically related kin) and "them" (those not like us, the authorities).[103] However, in a way that closely parallels other instances of "public talk" around Nina's death, Babin turned this distinction to purposes other than social reification.[104] He used the rhetoric of self-evidence not only to demonstrate the legitimacy and moral rectitude of his and the activists' intentions but also to question the actions of potential interlocutors who have refused to take social responsibility for the events of Nina's death.

What is the significance of the averted gaze? We can motivate this trope by recognizing another function of visual reference – its role of directing attention. To trace the complex presuppositions of the kind of joint attention implied by Babin's emphasis on visibility, let us consider the set of moral positions he mapped out for his interlocutors, as represented by the collective pronouns "us" and "them." Babin explicitly, and repeatedly, questioned the motivations behind the willfully averted gaze ("Where is everyone looking?"), in the context of self-evident facts of corruption.[105] He also distanced himself from this moral (and epistemic) stance of "looking" elsewhere by means of assertions marked with addressee-directed particles (*zhe* and *vot*),[106] and other visual evidentials (*vse zhe videli*) (25). These expressive assertions encoded Babin's certainty and conviction; at the same time, they implied a potential interlocutor who did *not* share his commitments.[107] Babin

[103] Along with the ethnographies of postsocialist talk discussed above, see in particular, Ibid.

[104] Due to space considerations, I cannot include the numerous examples here. However, appeals to the self-evidence of "what happened," and the effort to locate "us here and now" and "them there" with respect to "everyone everywhere" were powerful undercurrents in wider Novosibirsk discussions. For one example, see Margarita's comments in Elena. Vtoraia aktsiia pamiati Niny Shestakovoi sostoialas' v Novosibirske // Sibgrad. 2013. February 16. http://tinyurl.com/Sibgrad.

[105] For example, lines 23, 25, 42-43, 99-101, 142.

[106] *Zhe*, which appeared six times in the six-minute speech, is a particle that can mean "it is evident that," "but," "rather," and so on; it can be insistive or contradictive. The particle vot, which appeared seven times, can serve functions similar to the English "behold," "here before you," "this here," and so on. That is, it can be emphatic, directive, or presentative.

[107] An unmarked assertion expresses an epistemic and moral stance different from a marked one. As Paul Kockelman explains, "when a speaker encodes the status of her commitment to a narrated event, she invites us to infer another's commitment to an inverted narrated event – that is, the negation of the narrated event. This other can be the current or previous speaker or addressee." Paul Kockelman. Stance and Subjectivity // Journal of Linguistic Anthropology. 2004. Vol. 14. No. 2. P. 142.

negatively evaluated this inverted moral position (averted gaze), by linking it with a "laissez-faire" attitude toward lawlessness (*popustitel'stvo*) (18), "not recognizing" what happened (*ne priznaiut*) (44), and refusing to "punish" the guilty (9–10, 106).

Note, however, that the repeated visual evidentials and particles (*zhe* and *vot*), also have a strong presentative and directive effect.[108] That is, as Babin projected potentially immoral interlocutors, he also suggested that they were addressees as well. Babin asked: Whereto are the authorities, the public, and potentially everyone looking? He testified: I saw! Everyone saw! It's evident! But, he also *exhorted*: Just look! The possibility of using visual reference to direct attention points to the significance of the extended visual metaphor in Babin's public-making speech act. On the one hand, Babin urged "us" to compel a moral set of commitments from those who took no responsibility for *proizvol* by "getting together, … talking with people, writing, … fighting for justice" (75–78). On the other hand, Babin also addressed "them," directing their attention to what "everyone" had already seen happening before their very eyes.

By focusing on the agentive act of "looking elsewhere," and urging "them" to align their gazes with ours, Babin entailed that averting "their" eyes was all (im)moral others really could do to avoid taking responsibility for the events of Nina's death.[109] Perhaps, he implied, because they *knew* that if they only "looked," they would come to the same conclusions we did. In fact, Babin not so much to urged them to *look*, as to recognize *that* they had seen; that is, to compel them to take a moral stance toward "seeing" universally accessible facts. In other words, underpinning the directive to "them" to turn and look, and to recognize that they see, was the understanding that willful inattention required attention. Babin's address was thus *morally ironic*:[110] he claimed that "they" were looking away from "what happened," but at the same time that they saw and understood.

---

[108] "Directive utterances tell an addressee to turn his or her perceptual or attentional focus to the object and are typically associated with high-focus gestures such as pointing, directed gaze, and cocking of the ear." Hanks. Referential Practice. P. 507. While many utterances with deictic components can be used to direct attention to objects in grounds, only visual and sensory referentials are functionally specialized to do this.

[109] I am grateful to Paul Kockelman for pointing out this set of entailments of the visual metaphor.

[110] "In order to "get" the irony one must be familiar with shared presuppositions about the way the world is and the organization of interaction." Robin Shoaps. "Moral Irony": Moral Particles, Moral Persons and Indirect Stance-Taking in Sakapultek Discourse // Noel Burton-Roberts (Ed.). Pragmatics. Basingstoke, 2007. Pp. 297-335.

Note that Babin's emphasis on the visual modality echoed popular usage of the metaphor of *osveshchenie sobytii* ("illuminating" or "shining a light" on events) to describe the work performed by *obshchestvennost'* (the public), and the media.[111] For example, crucially to the process of contention, the journalist association had made a decision not to let Nina's case fall by the wayside, but to "illuminate" (*osveshchiat'*) it until it was resolved.[112] "Illuminating" states of affairs by mass-mediated communication enables joint attention to the facts, or "what happened," for ordinary citizens (rather than only for insiders or experts); that is, it satisfies this minimal criterion of membership in a modern public. Novosibirsk residents signaled that a "meta-topical,"[113] common discursive space was both necessary and possible, contrary to some scholars' expectations of Russians' media "cynicism."[114]

Yet, Babin entailed, work other than "illuminating" events had to be performed to produce a public opinion. Compelling the *recognition* of shared obligations by potentially immoral "others" was also required. But what created the barriers to "their" self-recognition? The otherness of the socially distant "them," "there" was not due to limits on public participation, such as differences in knowledge ("what happened" was directly, visibly accessible); education (there was no expertise required to interpret immediately clear facts); or perceptual or moral capacity. Rather it was *particular social interests* that imposed limits on a public's self-recognition, and enabled "their" immoral interpretations ("I do not have to see"), and behaviors ("looking away").

---

[111] Journalists, activists, as well as ordinary readers called for "illuminating" Nina's case, and did so using all of the means at their disposal. The effort of "illuminating" the accident (*osveshchenie*) began with an initial post by Nina's fiancé on VKontakte.ru, and friends' reposts on key social media platforms (as several commentators put it, social networks were buzzing / "sots seti gudiat"). Members of these groups "reposted" the details online, and called on others for "maximum reposting" (*maksimal'nyi repost*). The next day, and regularly thereafter, the news story was covered by the local TV station, News.ngs.ru (the first article had 80,000 viewings), as well as important news outlets read by city activists (e.g., Tayga.info). Car rallies, meetings, and protests happened throughout the year, as the investigation unfolded.

[112] Mazur. Interview.

[113] Taylor. Modern Social Imaginaries.

[114] See: Oates. Revolution Stalled. Roudakova. From the Fourth Estate to the Second Oldest Profession.

Babin, in synch with other activists, readers, and journalists, saw "their" immoral interpretive habits as conditioned by social status.[115] The status attributes of Babin, Nina, her mother, and the police officer, Alexei Mozgo, were all key elements that circulated after Nina's accident, across mass and social media discourse.[116] Note, for instance, the repeated point that at the time of the accident, Nina was waiting at a bus stop, while Mozgo drove an "inomarka" (foreign car), with a "blatnoi" 777 license plate number (signaling insider connections). The visible discrepancy between these means of transportation encapsulated the social distance between Nina and Mozgo. Nina was of a low socioeconomic status (she came from Novosibirsk's periphery, was raised by a single mom who was a trolley-bus conductor, and had yet to graduate from high school). Mozgo was a beneficiary of the recent police salary increases. Nina's mother had spoken publicly about an offer by the officer's family to pay for funeral expenses, which she rejected as an attempt to pay her off. In his speech, Babin reiterated these social particularities. For instance, he mentioned police salaries, and declared that seeing Nina's mother was proof that she was *not* someone who had come "pal'tsy zavorachivat'" (slang, to "put on airs") (137–138). Status differences not only imposed limits on the public's self-recognition, however; they posed a problem to be solved at the point of public discussion. As noted, the appeal to "us" and "them" not only demarcated boundaries but also identified addressees whose mutual recognition could be negotiated.

Alternative Stranger Sociabilities: The Problem of Social Particularity

The requirement of addressing groups marked by social status, in addition to potential strangers, structured the public-making efforts that followed Nina's death. Was the kind of stranger sociability entailed by this condition of address essentially different from that of mainstream discourse in the liberal

[115] See one of many testaments to status "bending" visible facts: " I snova – vse vse vidiat, vse vse ponimaiut, est' vse dokazatel'stva – no vse vyidut sukhimi iz vody, potomu chto est' te, kto mozhet kupit' chto ugodno – provdu, sovest', sledstvie." Fu gost'. Comment to "Chastitsy inspektora Mozgo". June 4, 2013.

[116] Police misbehavior was only part of the story, but it points to one of its key elements – immoral behavior by someone who claimed a separate social status (someone who, notably, benefited from recent police salary increases). Other relevant plot points included the fact that Mozgo was a traffic cop, taking exception to the traffic laws (*p'ianyi gaishnik*), and that the accident took place around the New Year's holidays, a time of collective ritual that makes social inequalities that much more ostensible. (In fact, there were examples of online poetry that played on this folkloric quality, see Comment by Gost', February 18, 2013 // http://sibkray.ru/news/1/602402/.)

public sphere? A crucial condition for the latter, as Michael Warner noted, involves distancing oneself from the "residue of unrecuperated particularity" that defines the private, social self.[117] Indeed, what gave the bourgeois public its aura of universal accessibility was that the condition for membership was "mere attention"; individuals' social particulars could simply be bracketed at the moment of encounter with circulating texts.

However, as Warner also reminds us, universal accessibility as an enabling postulate of modern public address is always in conflict with the limitations imposed by speech genres, media of circulation, and presupposed social bases.[118] Liberal political philosophy resolves this conflict by privileging the context-independent (truth-factual) content of utterances, to which readers would take a shared footing through the use of reason. "Rational" or "reasoned" opinion, for the bourgeois public, was one everyone could agree on given the same sources of information: an organizing trope of a "detemporalized and despatialized voice that, because of its universality, [could] be open to and accommodate all differences."[119] Accordingly, in "the court" of rational public opinion, it is assumed that the determination of "what happened" should carry moral implications that will be apparent to any fair-minded person.[120]

In the court of public opinion that took place in Novosibirsk, fellow citizens did not presume that shared interpretations of "what happened" would be guaranteed, whether by the idea of rationality or an alternative conceit. Babin passionately argued for the self-evidence of acts of lawlessness, and challenged the stance of potentially immoral addressees. In public conversations about Nina's case, this persuasive capacity of public speech, rather than its informational function, was similarly foregrounded. In this way, participants in public discussions accommodated social differences

---

[117] Michael Warner. The Mass Public and the Mass Subject // The Phantom Public Sphere. Minneapolis, 1993. Pp. 234-256. Cited in Agha. Recombinant Selves in Mass Mediated Space-time.

[118] Liberal publics work to overcome these limitations by relying on the capacity of discourse to be double-voiced: that is, for publicly circulating texts to address both "us" and "everyone" by using a style accessible only to socially particular individuals, but at the same time, to ideologically bracket "style" as a communicative value secondary to literal (truth-functional) meaning of all utterances that can (potentially) be accessed by everybody. Warner. Publics and Counterpublics.

[119] Lee. Talking Heads. P. 345. Historically, the construct of "rational opinion" was the result of idealizing the generalized publicity and anonymity associated with print mediation.

[120] As Philips argues, the evidentiary considerations specific to the narrow domain of the U.S. trial court are specialized variants of common-sense evidentiary standards.

by seeing these as relevant to building consensus, rather than as bracketed at the point of interaction. "Their" averted gazes, Babin and other earnest voices suggested, could be both imagined, and redirected. In sum, the particularities of the "rules of talk" operating in Novosibirsk did *not* suggest a fundamental inability of Russian citizens to imagine themselves as "like" fellow members of a public, or predicate collective identity on disengagement from political action. While some voices in Novosibirsk discussions signaled "cynical," "private," or "autonomizing" stances, well-described by area scholars, their perspectives were engaged in a dynamic, public conversation by publicly involved citizens.[121]

Conclusion

Public-making in Russia, as modeled by Babin and his fellow activists, journalists, and ordinary participants in online conversations, presupposed potential strangers with common perceptual and moral capabilities, but divergent interpretations of publicly accessible information. Rather than rely on rationality as a guarantee of consensus, they saw persuasion as a crucial means of securing shared interpretations of publicly circulating facts. They also emphasized the possibility of changing strangers' interpretations at the moment of address, rather than by presupposing (a priori) shared orientations. By developing an elaborate visual metaphor, Babin made particularly salient the importance of urging mutual recognition, rather than presupposing "mere attention," to the communicative pragmatics of public-making. His and other activists' particularizing sociological imaginations (in contrast to the universalist, determporalized, and despatialized liberal one) were, in a way, open to the relativity of interpretive habits. Accordingly, they privileged the kind of persuasive political speech that drives social movements rather than critical-rational deliberation.[122]

---

[121] I cannot include here numerous examples of the kind of earnest involvement with public mobilization, online or offline, that was voiced in anticipation of interlocutors expressing doubts. Yet, note that even Nina's mother felt that she had to justify her participation in protests by appealing to her daughter's standards of being "organized." Ocherednuiu aktsiiu pamiati Niny Shestakovoi proveli v Novosibirske.

[122] There is a long scholarly tradition of revealing the limits on public life imposed by the trope of rationality. I have relied on this literature to take liberal descriptions of publics apart from their universalists underpinnings, abandoning the distinction between "true consensus" produced through rational public opinion, and "false consensus," produced through other mechanisms of persuasion. As Richard Rorty notes, this move also involves eliminating the distinction between "validity" and "power." He cites the philosophical tradition of Hume, rather than Kant and Habermas: "Hume held that corrected (sometimes

The failure to prioritize "rational" opinion ("a particular historically conditioned and possibly transient form of solidarity") is, significantly, not a failure to appeal to solidarity as such.[123] (As critics of universalist political philosophy have shown, "irrational" behavior means no more than that we are stumped and morally outraged when asked why we disapprove of it.) Earnest voices in Russian public discussions did not see "them" as deprived of truth and moral knowledge; rather they saw "them" as deprived of sympathy, which ordinary citizens hoped to elicit by directing attention to moral sensibilities. The process of "them" coming to see "us" (and "us" coming to see "them") as "one of us," involved testifying to what "we" ourselves were like; as well as considering what the unfamiliar "they" were like; to persuade "them" to share our outrage at injustice. This work of public-making privileged affecting feelings and interpretations because something more than increased knowledge was required.

In many ways, Babin's performance did familiar political work, by enabling the Novosibirsk media to ground the production of public consensus in a self-sufficient oral performance.[124] Babin's speech secured the public it depicted by reference to a shared perceptual field and moral order, which supplied the "felicity conditions" for the public's performative effectiveness. Babin's address was directed toward fellow members of the public as well as toward those who may have been wavering and who had to recognize themselves to ratify it. Similarly, Novosibirsk's *obshchestvennoe mnenie* (public opinion) was, in many ways, not unlike its counterparts elsewhere. It was something that could be "formed" and "influenced," misled or manipulated. Its moods could be noted by statisticians, listened to in public hearings, or expressed by organized bodies such as public chambers. It could be represented by select "intermediaries" (activists or journalists). Yet, it had distinct characteristics.

---

rule-corrected) sympathy, not law-discerning reason, is the fundamental moral capacity." Habermas would say, Rorty notes, that this viewpoint entails betraying "the elements of reason in cultural modernity which are contained in … bourgeois ideals." Yet, Rorty, among others, responds that we do not have to abandon participatory democracy, with its liberal political genealogy, as we part with universalistic political philosophy and its framework for communicative pragmatics. Richard Rorty. Truth and Progress: Philosophical Papers. Cambridge, 1998. P. 181.

[123] Richard Rorty. Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity. Cambridge, 1989. P. xv.

[124] Insofar as Babin relied on an oral model of performativity that Novosibirsk media could presuppose in their subsequent circulation of his speech as a public-making address. For classic examples of this "familiar political" work, see Lee. Talking Heads, and Silverstein. Talking Politics.

In conversation around Nina's case, *obshchestvennyi rezonans* or *rezonansnoe delo* (social resonance) was the more common way to mention something like public opinion. *Rezonans* works mechanically – according to the principle of amplification, rather than persuasion ("the more people talk, the harder it will be to silence them"). In some of its effects, *osveshchenie sobytii* (as illumination) was a synonym for *rezonans*. It broadcast information, making it available to personal experience. These popular metaphors for the work of public opinion – as amplification of sound and radiation of light – complement well those rhetorical strategies by means of which Babin appealed to the self-evident facts of police *proizvol*, to illuminate "us here and now" as well as "everyone" as coengaged in visual (and moral) perception.

However, *osveshchenie* has a dual meaning. It is also an act of "shining a light" – that is, of *directing* attention. "Shining a light" not only illuminates "what happened," but also focalizes the direction of "their" gazes in relation to "ours," and by analogy, their stance with respect to ours, against the background of social responsibilities shared by members of our social imaginary. The activists engaged in the fight for justice in Nina's case presupposed this possibility of socially particular others who "looked" the other way: the authorities, or, perhaps, other groups within society at large. Their refusing to "see" is why "shining a light" (the function performed by *obshchestvennost'* and the media) seems to be an apt "pragmatic metaphor" for the work of making publics,[125] and mobilizing public opinion in Russia today. Interestingly, this metaphor of "shining a light" has been observed in other successful instances of Russian activism.[126] There seems to be a scholarly consensus that Russian social movements able to build a strong base of followers do so by "shining a light" on issues that affect the everyday lives of ordinary citizens, rather than by defending abstract rights. Perhaps "shining a light" is important, in Russia and elsewhere, because a guarantee of abstract rights will never suffice to right social wrongs, without particular voices also urging unfamiliar strangers to see themselves as fellow members of a public, with contestable commitments, but common capabilities.

---

[125] Michael Silverstein. Shifters, linguistic categories, and cultural description // Meaning in anthropology. Albuquerque, 1976. Pp. 11-56.

[126] For this formulation, Evans refers to a Moscow News article from 2011 reporting that activist leaders like Evgeniia Chirikova and Iurii Shevchuk "recognize that the way to engage a wider audience is not to deliver dogma, but to shine a light on issues which impact the daily lives of millions of Russians." Alfred B. Evans, Jr. Protests and Civil Society in Russia. Citing: Issues, Not Dogma, Tap into Russia's Political Consciousness // Moscow News. 2011. June 21.

Appendix

Dmitrii Babin's speech, March 10, 2012
(full transcript, with several lines omitted due to high wind causing recording corruption).

1	Не так давно, я считаю не так давно	Not so long ago, I don't consider it
2	потому что память моя как бы помнит	to be long ago because my memory...
3	о том что...	remembers that –
4	я не забыл эти события которые произошли три года назад.	I have not forgotten these events that happened three years ago.
[...]	[wind corrupts the recording for several seconds]	
5	Я сам попал в такую же ситуацию,	I myself was in a similar situation, but
6	только я выжил. Я на условном сроке.	I survived. I am on probation.
[...]		
7	Сейчас **я очень сильно волнуюсь**, но тем	Right now **I am very nervous** but
8	не менее.. Я хочу отдать данное девушке	nonetheless...
9	потому что виновные должны быть	I want to give the girl her due
10	наказаны, это обязательно, это обязательно.	because the perpetrators must be punished, this is required, this is required.
11	Понимаете... **смотрел** даже **видео** сюжет	[You] understand... I even **watched** the
12	где происходит в автомобиле замена, то	**video** story where a switch takes place
13	есть, пассажира с водителем.	in the car, that is, of the passenger with
14	Это просто, я ... ну понимаете, **видно**, что	the driver.
15	... да это любой следственный... да не	This is, I... well, [you] know, it's **evi-**
16	реально просто перекинуться просто с	**dent**, that... any investigative... it's just
17	места на места. Понимаете...	not possible [lit. not real] to just hop over from seat to seat. Understand…
18	Просто **попустительство со стороны**	[This is] just **connivance on the part**
19	сотрудниками полиции,	of the police officers,
20	допустим те же ДПС.	or let's say the traffic police.
21	Пусть **там** переименовали **их** в поли-	So **there** [**they**] have changed **their** name
22	цию, вместо милиции полицией стали.	to police, instead of *militsia* they became police.
[...]	[Explains that distinctions between traffic police and regular police do not matter, just as the recent police reform-related name change from *militsia* to *politsia* did not matter.]	
23	**Посмотрите** как они ездили по	**Look at** how they drove around
24	Шалычной…	Shashlychnaia [street]...
25	**Все же видели** как они ездили по	[**You saw that**] everyone **saw** how [the
26	Шашлычной	police] drove about on Shashlychnaia

	<assertion accompanied by shrug, which resolves in drawing out of hands to frame something happening in front of him>	
27	они **же** калымят, **открыто** калымят,	[**it's evident**] they take *kalym* [slang for
28	**несмотря на то** что они полиция.	petty extortion], **open** *kalym*, **regardless** of the fact that they are the police.
29	Так же **они себе позволяют** управлять	In the same way **they allow themselves** to
30	транспортом в нетрезвом виде.	control vehicles in a drunken state.
31	*<folds hands back into pockets>*	
32	То что произошло, то что происходило…	What happened, what was taking place…
33	Пусть со мной это произошло во время	So with me this happened at the time of
34	реформы, поэтому я считаю что у меня	the police reform, that is why I think I got
35	такой срок.	the term that I did.
36	Я сейчас, в данный момент я нахожусь	Now, at this moment, I am conditionally
37	на условном сроке... на меня иск. Тем не	sentenced... there is a suit against me. Nev-
38	менее **я пришел на свой страх и риск**	ertheless **I have come at my own risk**,
39	то что со мной может произойти..	despite] what could happen to me...
40	Я пришел поддержать вот маму девушки. *<points proximally, to mom next to him>*.	I came to support [here] the mom of the young woman.
41	И я не знаю, **у меня очень много эмоций** *<At this point in the speech, Babin draws out one hand to add emphasis to key words, or, alternatively, to maintain regular rhythm during emotionally heightened passages>*	And I don't know, **I have a lot of emotions**
42	**Куда смотрит** руководство –	**Whereto** the leadership **is looking** –
43	**Куда смотрит** руководство	**Whereto** the leadership of the police
44	полицейское?	**is looking**?
45	Почему прокуратура **не признают**, почему почему?	Why will the investigative committee **not recognize**, why, why?
[...]		
46	Как так? Как так?	How is this so? How so?
47	Был, я уверен на сто процентов, **я смо-**	It was, I am one hundred percent sure, **I**
48	**трел**, отслеживал ситуацию, я уверен	**watched**, kept track of this situation, I
49	на сто процентов что был сотрудник	am one hundred percent sure that it was
50	милиции. Уверен на все сто. Как так, у	a police officer [driving]. One hundred
51	него хватает совести подставить свою ...	percent sure. How could he stoop so low
52	не знаю жена или супруга. *<first relative peak in volume>*	so as to set up his... I don't know his wife or spouse...
53	А если бы сидела *мать* на его месте...	And what if his *mother* was sitting
54	вместо его супруги? Он бы тоже	[next to him] rather than his spouse? He
55	свою мать продал ради своих погон?	would sell out his own mother for the
56	*<second volume peak>* Я не знаю, ради	sake of his *epaulets*?
57	чего – ради *зарплаты*, ради *кредитов*? *<absolute volume increase>*	I don't know, for what – for his salary, his *loans*?

58	Я уверен даже что автомобиль на котором	I am even sure that the car transporting
59	он двигался, я не знаю обстоятельств	him, I do not know the circumstances
60	дела... он оформлен либо на матерь,	of the case... it is registered either to his
61	либо еще где-то.	mother, or elsewhere.
62	До каких пор это будет продолжаться?	How long will this keep happening?
63	Я не призываю ни к чему...	I do not call to anything…
64	Но ***люди***, я остался тогда один...	But ***people***, I was left then all alone...
65	Вот, общественность нет помогла в	No, [here] the public helped a lot at first.
66	первое время.	
67	Я признателен очень сильно.	I feel very grateful.
[...]	[Lists those who helped him out in his own struggle – journalists and lawyers, to whom he feels grateful.]	
	<takes second hand out of pocket to frame himself before the audience>	
68	Вот он **я перед вами**, может быть кто-то	**Here I am before you**, maybe there are
69	меня **не видел** ...	some who have **not seen** me...
70	Но *комментарии* которые писали обо мне,	But the comments that were written
71	мне очень обидно за это.. поймите	about me, I'm very hurt by them...
72	меня правильно.	understand me correctly.
	<relative peak in volume ends, hands go back in pockets, one hand reemerges as emphatic>	
73	И вот с *этой* ситуацией, это *вопиющая*	And with *this* situation, this is an *outra-*
74	ситуация...	*geous* situation...
75	Я не знаю, нужно *собираться* как-то... не	I don't know, we must *get together*... don't
76	знаю, нужно *разговаривать* с людьми,	know, [we] must *talk* with people, write
77	*писать*, в конце концов, писать в *Москву*,	[letters], in the end, *write* to *Moscow*, *fight*
78	*добиваться* справедливости.	for justice.
79	Люди, до каких *пор* вы будете это	People, how *long* will you stand for
	терпеть?	this?
	<absolute peak in volume begins>	
80	*Произвол* со стороны сотрудников ми-	This *lawlessness* on the part of police
81	лиции которые *с вас тянут деньги*,	officers who *draw money from you*,
82	*<heightening of emotion> тянут налоги*,	*draw taxes*, for what?
	за что?	
83	За что... *мы* им платим? *<rise in volume>*	What do *we*... pay them for?
84	За то что бы они убивали наших детей?	To kill our children?
85	Это *как*, объясните мне? …	*How* is that, explain [this] to me?...
86	Я не могу, у меня просто эмоции…	I can't, I just have [been overcome with]
87	извините меня, извините…	emotions… excuse me, I'm sorry…
	<turns to leave, but changes his mind and returns to speak further>	

88	Такие ситуации происходят я уверен..	Such situations take place, I am sure...
89	ежемесячно.	every month,
90	Раз в три месяца *сто процентов* их	Once every three months, with *one hun-*
91	подкидывают…	*dred percent* certainty they are set up…
92	их же сотрудники которые принимают,	their own coworkers who accept
93	принимают и подписывают начальство.	are accepted and signed by those in
94	*Почему* так происходит?	charge,
95	*Почему*, объясните?	*Why* does this happen?
	<Both hands out in appeal directed at circle of people. Remain out of pockets for the charged remainder of speech, despite freezing wind>	*Why,* explain [this to me]?
96	Почему они не соизволят объяснится?	Why do they not deign to explain themselves?
97	Почему?	Why?
98	Я не понимаю,	I don't understand,
99	Куда смотрит **общественность**?	Whereto **the public** is looking?
100	Куда смотрят депутаты?	Whereto the representatives are looking?
101	Куда смотрит в конце концов городское	Whereto, in the end, is the city adminis-
102	управление?	tration looking?
103	*Куда*?	*Whereto*?
	<relative peak in volume, emphatic pause>	
104	**Люди**, это *страшно*!	**People**, this is *frightening*!
105	**Вы** поймите, это *страшно*.	**You** must understand, this is *frightening*
106	Это происходит безнаказанно.	This goes unpunished.
107	Сотрудники милиции убивают ... **среди**	Police officers kill... in **broad day-**
108	**бела дня**... **среди бела дня** меня рас-	**light**... In **broad daylight** I was shot!
109	стреляли! Девчонку задавили!	They ran over the girl!
[...]	[Babin narrates accounts of desperate victims of police lawlessness who had turned to him with their stories, using vividly language, e.g. "Fathers sobbed"/"Отцы плакали!"]	
110	И это сплошь и рядом, это коснутся	And this [happens] time and again (right
111	может **любого**!	in our back yard), this can touch **anyone**!
	<Babin sweeps his left hand from in front of him out to the distance on the right side, signaling broad application of his assertion>	
112	**Вы** можете идти по улице, **вас**	**You** may be walking down the street,
	остановят...	**you** will be stopped...
	<same gesture in opposite direction, using right hand, resolves in pointing toward city center where the authorities are located>	

113	Вот эти *люди в погонах* которые... <*pointing "there" towards city center where the authorities are located*>	These *people in epaulets*, who...
114	которым *мы* платим налоги.	to whom *we* pay our taxes.
115	Которым *мы* платим зарплату, <*points angrily to the ground in front of him*>	To whom *we* pay salaries,
116	которым мы обязаны подчинятся!	whom we are required to obey!
117	Но тем не менее, **вы посмотрите** что	But nevertheless, just **look** at what *they*
118	они творят.	are doing.
119	*Они* говорят что они за порядок.	*They* say that they stand for order.
120	Почему *этого порядка* нет с *их* стороны?	Then why is there no *order* on *their* side?
121	**Где власть** .. которая [может] найти <*rel-*	**Where are the authorities**... that [can]
122	*ative peak in volume*> *управу* на них </>?	*rein* them in?
123	Люди! …	People!...
124	Это мое *личное* мнение.	This is my *personal* opinion.
125	Я не знаю что со мной после этого будет,	I don't know what will happen to me
126	я *пришел* это сказать. Я не знаю. Я на	after this. I *came* to say this. I don't
127	*условном* сроке, я еще раз говорю.	know. I'm on probation, I say it again.
128	Если что то со мной произойдет я	If anything happens to me I will surely,
129	обязательно, в ГТРК, я везде сообщу.	I will let GTRK [local TV station] know.
130	Но **я *пришел*** сказать это. <*points to the ground in front of him*>	But **I *came*** [**here**] to say this.
131	Я *искренне* вам соболезную. Держитесь.	I *earnestly* feel your pain, hold on.
132	Я..	I...
133	Спасибо вам <*hands represent circle of*	Thank you that you have not abandoned
134	*people*> что вы не бросили человека, что вы помогаете ей. <gestures to audience and then to mom>	[this] person, that you are helping her.
135	Это уже не [из] принципа...	Now this is not [out of] principle...
136	я думаю вот может быть там женщина,	I think [to myself] maybe some woman,
137	там, ну придёт там <*look of disgust*>	there, well, will come putting on airs
138	пальцы заворачивать </>, ну извините	[slang], well excuse [me] for [using]
139	за выражение.	this expression.
140	**Я вижу ее сейчас**, и понимаете, мне вот...	**I see her now**, and [you] understand, I
141	Мне за нее больно, обидно.	feel... I feel her pain, her offense.
142	**Куда** все ***смот-рят***? <shakes open hands in appeal gesture>	**Whereto** is everyone ***look-ing***?
143	Все, я сказал, спасибо. [Babin walks off behind nominal stage, organizer of car rally takes over and switches discussion to logistics. Babin is approached by journalist with audio recorder]	That's it, I said [my piece], thank you.

SUMMARY

What ideas and practices do ordinary Russians draw upon to mobilize public opinion in the struggle against the corrupt "system" (sistema) of police officials? In this article, I consider a case of social contention in Novosibirsk in 2013–14, which followed the death of a young woman in an accident involving a traffic police officer. The dynamics of contention I attend to suggest that Russia today has the social conditions for politically efficacious publics. In my analysis, I identify several strategies of "public-making" that take these conditions into account, to conjure a collective subject and "call out" to the constituencies that could give this subject legitimacy. The communicative styles I attend to are embedded in local histories of activism, and resonate with what we know about protest dynamics in Russia today. Drawing on literature that has urged thinking outside normative paradigms of the public sphere, I consider these "technologies of persuasion" as indicative of neither "liberal" nor "illiberal" regimes of textual circulation. Instead, I suggest, that as in the liberal models of stranger sociability, public-making in Novosibirsk presupposed a moral common sense, joint attention to a space of common discourse, and openness to potential strangers. However, it also required a different kind of political work. In addition to addressing potential strangers, activists had to persuade the potentially immoral "them" to set aside particular social interests, and recognize their shared footing with "us" with respect to self-evident actualities.

Резюме

На какие идеи и практики полагаются обычные россияне для мобилизации общественного мнения на борьбу с коррумпированной полицейской системой? В настоящей статье разбирается случай социального противостояния, имевший место в Новосибирске в 2013–14 гг., после гибели молодой женщины в ДТП с участием офицера полиции. Прослеженная автором динамика противостояния позволяет предположить, что в сегодняшней России есть социальные условия для появления политически эффективной общественности. Автор идентифицирует несколько стратегий "конструирования общественности" с использованием этих условий, фокусируясь на создании коллективного субъекта, выступающего от имени групп, наделяющих его легитимностью. Стиль коммуникации, анализируемый в статье, связан с местной историей

активизма и соответствует тому, что мы знаем о протестной динамике в сегодняшней России. Развивая подходы, стимулирующие выход за пределы нормативных парадигм публичной сферы, автор отказывается классифицировать эти "технологии убеждения" как индикаторы "либерального" или "нелиберального" режима текстуальной циркуляции. С одной стороны, в соответствии с либеральными моделями социабильности чужаков, конструирование общественности в Новосибирске основывается на предполагаемом разделяемом всеми моральном здравом смысле, совместном внимании к пространству общего дискурса и открытости потенциальным чужакам. В то же время, оно требует иного типа политической работы. Помимо обращения к потенциальным чужакам, активисты должны убедить потенциально имморальных "их" отказаться от определенных социальных интересов и признать, на основании очевидных фактов, общую базу с "нами".