

Copyright

by

Natalia V. Kovalyova

2009

The Dissertation Committee for Natalia Vasilyevna Kovalyova

certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

RHETORICAL MARKERS OF DEMOCRATIZATION

Committee:

Roderick P. Hart, Supervisor

Barry Brummett

Madeline M. Maxwell

Robert G. Moser

Sharon E. Jarvis

RHETORICAL MARKERS OF DEMOCRATIZATION

by

Natalia Vasilyevna Kovalyova, Dip.; M.Ed.

Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

December 2009

RHETORICAL MARKERS OF DEMOCRATIZATION

Publication No. _____

Natalia Vasilyevna Kovalyova, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2009

Supervisor: Roderick P. Hart

This study was motivated by a variety of democratic experience in the world that interchangeably perplexes and inspires students of politics. To understand the processes by which democracies emerge, this study was launched to examine new democracies from a discursive perspective. Four main questions guided the inquiry: (1) *Is there a rhetorical/discursive counterpart to the process of democratization?* (2) *If so, what are the rhetorical features and markers of democratic changes?* (3) *What specific discursive practices correlate with growth and/or decline of democracy?* and (4) *What practical value might there be to having a more sensitive measure of democratic growth and/or decline?* To answer these questions, a critical discourse analysis was conducted on two genres of Russian public discourse juxtaposing lay (letters to the editor) and elite

(editorials) voices in three national periodicals during four election seasons between 1996 and 2008.

The analysis of lay discourse revealed (a) that ordinary Russians enjoy expressing their opinions, (b) that they are argumentative, (c) that their repertoire of political voices is rather small, and (d) that their discussions are gradually sliding toward trivial matters. These findings portrayed a public that is attentive to public affairs and speaks out in a forum. Elite voices, on the other hand, were found (e) to be mesmerized by politics, (f) to think of the political world as detached from ordinary life, and (g) to envision the audience of ironic bystanders. Together, these findings pointed to a conclusion that ordinary Russians are rarely summoned either to renew democracy or to improve upon it. Consequently, they rarely identify themselves as true democrats, although many of their discursive practices resemble those that are thought of as a staple of the democratic public sphere.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of tables.....	viii
List of figures.....	ix
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Why discourse?.....	8
Why russia?	12
A discursive theory of democratization.....	15
Conclusion.....	22
Chapter Two: Methodology.....	24
Which discourse?.....	28
Why critical discourse analysis?.....	36
Chapter Three: Rhetorical markers of political change	43
The wooden language of soviet politics	44
Nondiscursive aspects of democratization	50
Democratization and political communication.....	58
Chapter Four: Letters to the editor.....	68
Participants to the forum.....	73
The forum's agenda.....	84
The tone of the forum	101
Concluding remarks.....	111
Chapter Five: Editorials	114
Historical background.....	116
Trend 1: Russian editorialists are mesmerized by the political world.....	120
Trend 2: Editorials structure the political world in a peculiar way	125
Trend 3: Editorialists do not repeat the government's line.	136
Trend 4: Editorialists have become interactive and conversational.	142
Discussion.....	151

Chapter Six: From subjects into citizens	154
Bypassing the audience	157
Mismatched agendas.....	179
Dissolving political activism	192
Discussion.....	200
Chapter Seven: Conclusion.....	206
Lessons learned.....	213
Implications	218
Limitations.....	223
Future research	225
Concluding remarks.....	229
References.....	235
Vita.....	305

List of Tables

Table 2.1. Data Sources	33
Table 2.2. Data by Year	35
Table 4.1. Writer’s Voice across Time	77
Table 4.2. Audience Composition across Time	80
Table 4.3. Issues in Letters to the Editor across Time	85
Table 4.4. Writers’ Voices by Topic Distribution	89
Table 4.5. Letters’ Goals across Time	99
Table 5.1. Editorial Topics across Time	121
Table 5.2. Sources Cited in Editorials across Time	123
Table 5.3. Editorials’ Slant across Time	137
Table 5.4. Editorials’ Slant by Publication	140
Table 6.1. Ratio of Personal Pronouns to First Person Singular in Two Genres	160
Table 6.2. Top Semantic Roles of Personal Pronouns	162
Table 6.3. Semantic Roles of WE vs THEY in Two Genres	168
Table 6.4. Selected Roles and Cognitive Attributes of WE in Two Genres	172
Table 6.5. Thematic Composition of Letters	180
Table 6.6. Top Change Agents Mentioned in Two Genres	183
Table 6.7. Distribution of Author’s Stance in Genres over Time	185
Table 6.8. Distribution of Author’s Stance in Russian Press 1996-2008 by Genre	186

List of Figures

Figure 4.1. High and Low Vocabulary in Letters	108
Figure 5.1. Means of Readers' Engagement over Time	144
Figure 5.2. High versus Low Vocabulary over Time	147

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“Russia was freer 10 years ago than it is today,” declared Zbigniew Brzezinski (2008), a man whose job in the midst of the Cold War required direct contacts with the Soviet top officials. In the 1990s, Russia’s democratic trajectory was “erratic, convoluted, and often misguided.” The country was not an institutionalized liberal democracy but was moving in that direction. Those efforts have now been abandoned, and their accomplishments rolled back. The culprit, in Brzezinski’s judgment, was obvious. “Putin has arrested and then reversed Russia’s political evolution toward a genuine constitutional democracy,” he announced.

Russia’s former president, however, is not the only political leader charged with crimes against democracy. Closer to home for Brzezinski, rhetorical scholars Stephen Hartnett and Jennifer Mercieca (2007) found an anti-democratic condition at the very core of the American political system. Contemporary presidential discourse, they argued, does not “mobilize, educate, and uplift the masses” any more (p.599). In the age of white noise, American presidential rhetoric “marshals ubiquitous public chatter, waves of misinformation, and cascades of confusion-causing misdirection” (ibid). Based on these symptoms, Hartnett and Mercieca pronounced American democracy functionally dead at the hands of George W. Bush.

If both accounts are accurate, a question emerges. What makes democracies democratic today? Some scholars describe the current state as democracy without the demos (Wolin, 2008, p.26). Others search for certain features that unite all democratic

sub-types even if a growing number of political regimes that call themselves democratic do not share many of those features. With more and more countries claiming to follow a democratic path despite their obvious imperfections, democratic theory finds itself in crisis. Not only is the democratic family becoming more and more diverse, but it is also getting less stable. In some twenty years since 1974, identified as the third wave of democratization, 85 authoritarian regimes have ceased to exist. Yet only 30 of them are now counted among the world's surviving democracies. The rest have had a different fate (Geddes, 1999). This record does not speak for an overwhelming success of democracy or of a proven path toward it. Particularly puzzling are transitions from the former communist regimes. They take a less certain form, do not follow a single path, and do not bring democratizing nations to the same destination. Should we expect all democracies to resemble each other, conforming to some timeless democratic standard? Or should we recognize the developmental curve and compare new democracies' successes to those of more advanced ones when they were 15 or 20 years of age? Is it the case that people are establishing impact regimes or is it that our conceptual grid fails to capture the nuances of a contemporary democratic life?

Addressing the fit between a democratic ideal and its implementations, some scholars have proposed to replace the minimal (procedural) definition of democracy and use a term like "electoral democracy," for instance, to describe a nation that has established elections but that is missing other democratic institutions. Making such distinctions, however, has led to such a proliferation of partial and incomplete democracies that conceptual purists have viewed it as the dangerous stretching of a

concept (Carothers, 2002; Collier & Levitsky, 1997; Collier & Adcock, 1999; Collier, Hidalgo & Maciuceanu, 2006; Levitsky & Way, 2002).

But to ask whether Russia, Tanzania, Paraguay, or any other country is a democracy is not to engage in idle inquiry. The answer entails enormous consequences. Apart from the conceptual beauty of clear-cut types of democracy, unambiguous labels of political regimes carry significant practical implications. Economic partnerships, trade and tariff agreements, memberships in international organizations, cultural exchanges, prospects of aid in times of need and, therefore, chances for people to have a better life often depend on a country's political profile.

To date, scholars have produced an impressive body of literature on democracies and democratic change. They have looked at economic development (Bellin, 2000; Ross, 2001; Frye, 2003) and economic reforms (Hellman, 1998) asking if there is an affluence threshold to democracy. They have detailed institutional designs (Fish, 1995, 2001a, 2001b; Hoffman, 2005) and elites' relations that affect democratic outcomes (Higley & Burton, 1989; Higley, Kullberg, and Pakulski, 1996; Higley & Lengyel, 2000). They have explored cultural pre-requisites deemed necessary for democracy to emerge (Inglehart 2000, 2003; Inglehart & Welzel, 2003; Gibson, 1996, 2001, 2002; Mishler & Rose, 1997, 2005). They have explained the relations between the civil society and democratic stability (Putnam, 1993, 1995; Howard, 2002). In addition, they have debated the role of ethnic diversity in democratizing nations, applauding or bemoaning its progress in the post-communist world. While many researchers have contributed to this debate, some basic questions remain to be asked, including practices through which

democratic institutions are put in action. A turn from structures to actions, from hard to soft indicators, from classifying features of regimes to interpreting behavior of political agents, have not yet produced a landslide shift in democratization studies but their promise has already been noted (Whitehead, 2002; Finlayson, 2004a).

My study follows this trajectory and attends to the rhetorical underpinning of democratic change. Specifically I ask: (1) Is there a rhetorical counterpart to democratization? (2) What are the rhetorical markers of democratic change? (3) What specific discursive practices correlate with growth and decline of democracy as it is measured by other indices? and (4) What practical value might there be to having a discursive measure of democratic change? In this chapter, I will outline why I chose a discursive approach, what previous research on discourse and democracy has formed the background for my study, and why I have used political discourse in Russia as my case in point.

Scholars searching for more comprehensive ways of describing change in political systems have noted that to account for democracy as a political system, paying attention only to institutions is not enough. Institutions do not bring democracy to life. To last, a democratic system needs more than existing political institutions, a separation of powers, or a principle of holding regular elections written down in the Constitution. Democracy is inseparable from its practices. Occasionally, this idea of a broader context of democracy appears as the backdrop to mainstream definitions. Lipset (1960), for one, defined democracy as a “political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing governing officials, and *social mechanism* (emphasis is mine – NK) which

permits the largest part of the population to influence major decisions by choosing among contenders for political office.” Although the social mechanism of democracy has attracted the attention of scholars much later than the institutional design, their efforts have shown that theories of democracy will gain in their explanatory power and predicting force if they broaden their scope to include people and their practices. For example, studies of democratic reform in the post-Communist world have shown that lay concepts of democracy often do not match minimal, procedural definitions. A disjunction between the indigenous understanding of democracy and the governmental policies that are often crafted after policies of the advanced democracies or under the direct supervision of the international bodies such as the IMF or the World Bank has a political effect: it translates to a lower level of support for the existing government. For instance, Fuchs (1999) reported differences between the understanding of democracy in two parts of Germany – eastern and western. For East Germans, the ideal democracy – which they support in the abstract – is not the minimal democracy under which they live. Consequently, they do not express much support for a government that fails to deliver all the services it is expected to. In contrast, West Germans do see democracy in minimalist terms and do not blame democratic government for failures to provide social benefits that their Eastern counterparts expect. “The low level of support for the type of democracy,” warns Fuchs, “implies a disposition to change this type structurally” (p.143).

If studies of democratization pay attention to political actors, they tend to focus on the elites as crucial decision-makers and on their bargaining as “the central drama in the transition story” (McFaul, 2001b, p.6-7). Although institutional design is largely an “elite

endeavor” (ibid.), the drama of democratic transition featuring only such characters as presidents, their advisers, political allies, and enemies overlooks millions of ordinary participants. When the masses and their actions are considered, the two types of actors rarely share the same stage. In a recent study of different political regimes and their repertoires, Charles Tilly (2007) points out this problematic inconsistency in current theories of democracy. On the one hand, theorists treat elites’ settlements as the necessary and sufficient condition for democracy; on the other hand, they promote a view of democracy as emerging from open debate, equally accessible to elites as well as the masses (p.2). Democratic politics, Tilly emphasizes, depends upon the presence of several elements, but bargaining among rulers and citizens about the means of making collective claims is central to a democratic way of doing politics.

One suggestion for the adjustment of existing democratization theory has been proposed by Robert Lieberman (2002). He envisioned a combination of an institutional with an ideational analysis. Pointing out the insufficiency of the institutional approach to political change, Lieberman contended that although institutional theories can “effectively derive predictions” about specified outcomes, they can reveal nothing about the demands or the beliefs that led actors to a particular decision (p. 697). Goals and desires that “people bring to the political world” fall into the “explanatory gap” of most theories, observed Lieberman (p.697). Attention to ideas circulating in the political realm is important, he continued, because “understanding which ideas win, ... why, and with what consequence for whom” is an indispensable part of understanding politics (p.700).

Ellen Carnaghan (2007b) who conducted studies of political attitudes of ‘imperfect democrats’ has recently upheld the conceptual soundness of Lieberman’s proposal of a double focus – on institutions as well as on ideas. Says Carnaghan:

Institutions help create the attitudes that will in turn involve how well they function. Scholars need to study popular attitudes not as enduring cultural artifacts, formed in the past, insensitive to the demands of the present, but that as products, at least in part, of that very present. By better understanding how attitudes are constructed, we can better understand how they change and how they can be reconstructed so that they will better fit in the institutions that people may want to create (p.24).

Another scholar urging a more flexible approach to democratization is Laurence Whitehead (2002), who points out that “democratization is best understood as a complex, long-term, dynamic, and open-ended process.” It contains internal tensions and unfolds with many “false starts, misjudgments, detours, and unintended consequences,” including great “imprecision” about such questions as the time needed for the transition to be completed, outcomes, its impact on various groups, and the like (p.28). To understand democratization and to estimate its relative magnitude, argues Whitehead, we need an instrument more sensitive and flexible than a mere litmus test of compliance with minimal democratic procedures (p.27). In its stead, he proposes an “interpretivist” approach as more “appropriate” to the subject-matter because it avoids claims of causality and directs attention to persuasive components of democratization and to its “self-directing characteristics” (p.35).

WHY DISCOURSE?

The human side of democratic reforms - aspirations, fears, and hopes that sustain or suppress political change, patterns of ideas and struggles among their proponents that shape the future of the entire nation - can be assessed through public discourse. Knowing what the general public thinks about an ongoing political transformation, how they evaluate its progress, the means with which the reforms are implemented, and the ends toward which they are oriented, we will have a fuller picture of the fits and starts of democratization. Also, discourse is a common element that cuts across the spheres of law, economics, civil society, public administration, and politics. Statutes, regulations, white papers, speeches, declarations, debates, campaigns, and the like constitute a variety of discursive formats and genres that are used in governing a nation. It is involved in shaping and transmitting values, beliefs, and attitudes that form and help maintain those institutions. Thus, discourse conveniently provides access to both institutional and human, structural/procedural and attitudinal components of democratization, and, as I will argue further, to practices that set democratic institutions in motion.

Although theorizing about public discourse in democratic governance dates back to ancient Greece and Rome, transitions to democracy remain, for the most part, an uncharted territory for experts in political rhetoric. Because public speaking and argumentation skills were so central to citizens' political participation of city-states, and by the same token to democratic governance, we now know a lot about how democracy works rather than how democracy takes root. As Thomas Goodnight (1990) noted, "the democratic experiment was – and still is – closely tied to the assumptions of the classical

rhetorical tradition” (p.176) that guaranteed freedom of speech and freedom of assembly and relied on justified assent.

Yet, centuries of theoretical and practical attempts to figure out how democratic governance is set up best have produced a very short list of requirements for democratic discourse. First, discourse that supports democratic practices develops along *dialogical* rather than monological lines and prefers deliberation to demonstrations (Gastil, 1992a; Roberts-Miller, 1999) because a dialogue - not a monologue - engages the other side.

Says Roberts-Miller:

Dialogical discourse (variously called consensual communication or controversial thinking) is a dynamic form that incorporates various points of view into a multiply voices dialogue orientated toward a better understanding (p. 172-3). Because it is dialogical and engaging, democratic discourse is *pluralistic*. It is open to many styles and opinions (Cmiel, 1990) and invites a cacophony of voices (Asen & Brouwer, 2001; Fraser, 1990; Hauser, 1999; Warner, 2002). It recognizes differences in attitudes, beliefs, lifestyles, ideas about the ends and means of achieving various goals as well as the meaning of those ends, means, and goals. But recognition of plurality does not exhaust democratic practices. Instead, it provides “the basic grist for political debate” (Dryzek & Niemeyer, 2006, p.635).

Another important quality of democratic discourse is the *degree of uncertainty* about future action and future political actors. Uncertainty here should not be viewed as an idiosyncratic liking of a specific vocabulary (*perhaps, maybe, might, seemingly*, etc). Instead, as Russell Bentley (2004) remarked, in a democratic discourse, uncertainty is

ingrained in the mode of reasoning that recognizes the possibility of different narratives, of alternative interpretations, of contradictory conclusions to which those who are addressed may come. Explains Bentley:

[Rhetoric in the public sphere] starts from the view that persuasion begins when we try to describe what an issue is and continues with an awareness that we wish to convince specific individuals. It conceptualizes citizens as complexly motivated agents who find their value commitments undergoing modification over time for a variety of reasons. They also experience these commitments with varying intensity as they encounter and consider different issues (p.133).

Emphasizing the role of rhetoric in a democratically run polity, David Williams (2006) made a similar observation regarding uncertainty:

Democracy occurs in the domain of the uncertain; it is an exercise in choice in the realm of the probable rather than the certain – and the regulation of uncertainty through the exercise of ideas is the realm of rhetoric and argumentation. The ‘co-dependency’ between rhetoric and democracy can be seen both historically and theoretically. (p.228)

Because it is pluralistic and tolerates a high level of uncertainty, democratic discourse inevitably includes *dissent* and requires that opposing opinions, uncommon views, and alternative solutions always be considered and understood. Attending to the other side of a given case is critical for democratic politics, which, by definition, is a realm of constant contestation. Yet, in a democracy, politics is “the alternative to warfare,” as Robert Ivie

(2007a) recently pointed out. In a democracy, those who disagree do not become the side against which to wage a war. Says Ivie,

Persuasion, rather than coercion, is the operative mode of political contestation and the means by which one attempts to correct a mistaken rival rather than to eradicate or neutralize an evil threat. (p.108)

Thus, because violence and “naked” force are illegitimate means for democratic politics, the latter thrives on discursive means and *rational debates*. However, to say that democratic discourse encourages argumentation does not mean that it embraces all sorts of arguments. As many totalitarian regimes have demonstrated, some ideas can and should be suspected (Klemperer 2000). Developing a theory of the public sphere, Jürgen Habermas emphasizes public reasoning that abandons traces of face-to-face interaction and promotes arguments as valid for and comprehensible by any people anywhere (Habermas, 1991; Young, 2000). Krell-Laluhova & Schnedier (2004) pointed out differences in the type of the claims possible in democratic and non-democratic polity. Focusing on the claims of legitimacy, they found that democratic claims are more fluid and uncertain and appeal to popular participation, accountability, and transparency while non-democratic claims to legitimacy rest upon charismatic leadership, religious authority, respect of traditions, identity, and some others. Additionally, they show that democratic argumentation is concerned with such outcomes as people and their feelings (empowerment), while the non-democratic impulse features systemic characteristics, especially the system’s effectiveness and efficiency.

Finally, researchers have also noted that democratic politics prefers *informal language* (Lasswell, 1949, 1968) and often goes through a stage of ‘vulgarization’ after the authoritarian control and demands of uniform standards are loosened (Rodden, 2004; Cmiel, 1990; Mbembe, 1992). As Cmiel demonstrated in the example of the English language development in the U.S. in the 19th century, the use of plain language in public discourse increased as a result of political change when the power shifted (or at least when it was claimed to have done so) to the people. The new agents in politics brought in a new language and established a new set of roles for the speaker, for the audience, and for discourse itself.

To sum up, discourse in democratic politics 1) is open and inclusive; 2) prefers a dialogue and deliberation; 3) rests on rational debate; 4) is open to alternatives; 5) features the vernacular.

WHY RUSSIA?

Undoubtedly, there is no shortage of sites for studying democratic discourse and its role in the political reform. Yet Russia holds a special attraction to students of democracy. During the Cold War, the military might of the Soviet Union guaranteed the attention of foreign policy makers in the West and made the Soviets “a ready source of headlines for news” (Bressler, 2009, p.1). After 1991, Russia lost its threatening image and, as a consequence, its attraction to foreign policy experts. But it has since bounced back, having “reclaimed as least a part of its former status” (ibid). What kind of partner is Russia now? Is it willing to play along or is it going to demand special attention and preferential treatment? How predictable is its behavior going to be? Is it going to uphold

earlier commitments to democracy? Political transformations of the magnitude that affected the former Soviet bloc created a functional disruption in many institutions. That disruption was more profound than an introduction of “alternative elections,” as elections with more than one candidate on the ballot were known back then.

Elections change officials in the key positions in the government but they do not dismantle political institutions that make up the governing system: the constitution, the party system, or the opposition in a parliament. Transformations of the political regime, on the other hand, affect it on the systemic level, replacing one system with another (Rose, Mishler, and Munro, 2008, p.3). In the 20th century, the Russian political system was transformed several times. First, the Revolution ended the rule of the Romanovs. A new state of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics created to replace the empire lasted some 60 years. Reforms started by Mikhail Gorbachev in the late 1980s led to the dissolution of the Union and to the emergence of Russia as an independent nation hopeful to start on a democratic path. The old Soviet institutions were erased and the old Soviet way of governing was discredited. New political figures came to power. Yet, by many accounts, these events did not bring democracy to Russians. What went wrong and who lost Russia are the questions that puzzle scholars and politicians around the world.

My choice of Russia for a rhetorical exploration of democratic change is based on several considerations. Russian political rhetoric resonates for many countries that now belong to the European Union. Russian slogans about the world order, about protection of the state sovereignty, about the U.S. domination have a familiar ring to many “new” Europeans and “many countries share Putin’s views ... that today’s security threats

cannot be dealt with in isolation and require concerted action by all strategic players” (Facon, 2008, p.11). Studies of Russian political discourse may provide insights into Russian policy-making unattainable in other ways.

Also, despite an occasionally voiced scare that Russia is leaving (or has already left) the West, it does not want to do so. The country needs the West to accomplish its own goal of integration into the global economy but, as Facon (2008) observed, “long-term frustration with the West” is detectable in the rhetoric of many Russian leaders who talk about a unique path and their resolve not to follow Washington’s lead.

Communication scholars are uniquely positioned to explore whether differences are viewed as minor disagreements that could be worked through, whether they are built into “a major bone of contention” (p.6), and whether Russian leaders truly intended to resolve conflicts in discursive, that is, non-violent ways via talk and compromise.

In addition, the Russian experience in democratization that, contrary to the expectations of many experts, advisors, and consultants, has not gone well presents a puzzle both for policy-makers and theorists. Are the current models of democracy universally applicable? Should the theories of democratization be adjusted to explain post-communist transitions and, if so, in what way? If those theories reflect, as Martin Malia (1999) argued, political and socio-economic currents inside the West as much as they have conditions inside Russia, what does it tell about the label of a failed democracy that has been appended to Russia and other post-Soviet countries? Some former advisors and midwives of Russian transitions into capitalism who concluded that “we lost Russia” (read, misled it by pursuing agendas and supporting people that were

“hopelessly wrong for Russia”) now recommend that Russia find itself on its own because the West “can do little more than watch, offering an occasional bit of encouragement from the sidelines” (Lloyd, 1999, p. 36-61). Yet, even if Russia has indeed failed to become a democracy in spite of grand change on the institutional level, its failed experience is worth looking at for the instructive moments. A malfunctioned mechanism of a democratic transition can highlight crucial elements and processes that are taken for granted when they work properly. Thus, advanced democracies, whose memories of the early days of democratic government have lost their acuteness, may draw new lessons from the Russian experience and be reminded what it takes to build and keep a democracy.

A DISCURSIVE THEORY OF DEMOCRATIZATION

Political science has also recognized the role of public conversation for the well-being of democracy (Eliasoph, 2000) but not much research has been devoted to discourse in emerging and transitional democracies and its role in facilitating democratic change. An initial attempt to develop a discursive theory of democratization has been made by Richard Anderson (1996, 1997) and his collaborators who started from an observation that change in a political regime is reflected in the language of politicians. In the section that follows, I will outline major propositions of this theory and highlight parts in need of conceptual revision and/or expansion.

Authoritarian rulers, noticed Anderson, sometimes use a language specifically invented for politics, a sphere in which they, but not ordinary people, figure as major actors. Such a political language “insulates” the rulers from the population under their

control. Moreover, it signals that ordinary folks and their ways of discussing political matters are inadequate (Anderson, 1997, p.23). The colonial rule around the world routinely uses the language of the conquerors. A prestigious foreign language or a dialect is often employed for administrative purposes. For example, until 1815 the British Parliament accepted petitions written only in a particular “learned” style of English (Smith 1984, cited in Anderson 2001). The Ottoman Empire also conducted public affairs in a “bureaucratic style” richly seasoned with Persian and Arabic terms. Russian officials carried out imperial business in a language that was full of Greek calques while the Russian aristocracy, including the tzars’ court, spoke French.

By contrast, democratic polities tend to practice politics in the vernacular, and transitions to democracy often introduce sweeping linguistic reforms. As history tells it, Royal French was abandoned by the French revolutionaries in favor of the common parlance. Unfortunately, their desire to impose a uniform language instead of allowing citizens to do politics in a variety of dialects led to the re-establishment of elevated French that later became a new language of rule under Napoleon (Anderson, 2001, p.112). In Haiti, a democratic movement shifted from French to Creole. Postwar Germany faced the task of ‘cleaning’ the language from Nazi locutions (p.113). In Turkey, Kemal Ataturk established a special commission to eliminate Persian and Arabic elements from the language of politics. Reforms started by Ataturk saw a second round in the mid 20th century when the bureaucratic encroachments on the Turkish vernacular had to be purged one more time.

Behind those grand changes lie not some mysterious linguistic processes that magically lift the language to new heights of free expression once the old regime is gone. Quite the opposite is often the case. Changes in language are propelled by concrete people with concrete interests. Democratic politics, Anderson (1997) noted, depends on voters' choices of those entrusted with political office and on the popular affiliation with the broader political realm. Therefore, electoral politicians, as Anderson calls them, need the support of competent, well-informed citizens on policy matters. So they have little choice but to express their ideas and programs in ordinary language because, otherwise, they would "contradict" their own message of political trust in ordinary people and in their collective wisdom (p.23).

In early days of Russian democratization, Anderson's theory found support in abundant measure. In the 1990s, changes in Russian public discourse reached a Babylonian scale: social groups which never before had access to the public arena could now address their fellow-citizens in the parliament, at mass rallies, on radio, and television (Ryazanova-Clarke, 2002); a range of permissible registers was broadened and brought back into the open the lofty language of the church as well as the criminal argot; borrowed words increased in a variety of spheres from business to popular culture; political keywords shifted, and the meaning of some words already existing in the language was altered as well (Gorham, 2000). Testing his hypotheses about language in this environment, Anderson demonstrated that Russian citizens found remarks by electoral politicians of recent vintage more attractive than those uttered by politicians of the Soviet era. Asking ordinary Russians to evaluate speeches from three different

periods, Anderson et al (1995) registered a decrease in the perceived triteness of political texts. Because his post-Soviet texts included speeches given both by new political figures and old-timers from the Politburo, he concluded that this deviation from the old idiom was produced by political change. With the start of Gorbachev's rule, it became "self-defeating" for a politician to use clichés of the Soviet political language. When speaking publicly, they had to adopt an idiom closer to the language of ordinary people. Moreover, because an increased use of the vernacular in political discourse was found at a time when economic conditions in Russia were abysmal, it prompted Anderson to advocate the primacy of ideas over political institutions and to formulate the major premise of his theory as follows: "Transitions to democracy often begin with a change in political discourse" (Anderson, Chervyakov, and Parshin, 1997).

Apart from the shift to the vernacular that shortened the distance between leaders and the masses, Anderson also theorized about the change of political identities. All political theories, including theories of democracy, envision agents of a certain type, with certain kinds of powers and intentions (Ball, 1988, p.125). Anderson's theory of democratization postulates two changes in political identities. Identities fade, he posits, if and because discourses supporting them change. Under the pressure of connecting to the masses, the former authoritarian rulers become unable to stay unified. Their dominating identity loses the support of the authoritarian language, and with it "erodes" their determination to repress political activities of people formerly excluded from politics. At the same time, the new political discourse embraces the vernacular - the language of the very same people who were early denied participation in political decision-making. As a

result, a sharp division between rulers and the ruled is replaced by interconnections among citizens of an equal political standing. Authoritarian language needs to reinforce a cleavage between the powerful and the powerless in order to disrupt the development of positive political identity among ordinary people. If the masses perceive differences between social groups (most importantly, between themselves and the rulers) but do not share a common identity among themselves, they remain inactive and shrink from politics, paving the way for undemocratic rulers to keep power with the scarce resources available to them (Anderson et al, 1995, p. 888). Democratic language, on the other hand, closes that gap between the rulers and the ruled. “Dictatorship crumbles and democracy emerges when political discourse changes from linguistic cues that isolate the elite from the people to linguistic cues that merge the elites into the people,” concludes Anderson (2001, p.97). Will Kymlicka (2001) once expressed a similar idea connecting democratic politics and the vernacular: Democratic politics is politics in the vernacular; the average citizen feels at ease only when he discusses political questions in his own language (p. 214).

Yet Anderson’s overly optimistic statement about the causal arrow running from discourse to institutional change should be treated with a fair amount of caution. Examining the discourse of Gorbachev’s Politburo, he indeed found that its members “changed their discourse as they changed the institutions” and that “partial abandonment of authoritarian discourse was followed by the appearance of new, more fully electoral institutions” (Anderson, 2001, p. 335). In other words, Gorbachev and the other Soviet leaders started talking differently before they started reforming the Soviet Union.

Whether or not discursive alterations actually forced institutional changes remains a proposition in need of defense, particularly for a nation that has known a sizeable gap between the proclamations of its leaders and the lives of its people. Although new policies and new political talk pioneered by Gorbachev called for more criticism and more democracy, it was a call for self-criticism rather than for criticism of the party's line and a call for a social democracy of the Soviet brand. Least of all was it a call for dismantling of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev's goal was to strengthen the Soviet system via reviving Leninist principles and to strengthen his position as a party's leader rather than empowering ordinary people. The fact that the new political talk started a process that eventually brought the system down speaks for it as a catalyst, not causal, function.

Among reasons for authoritarian rulers to maintain a distinctive language of command in spite of the high cost it takes, Anderson emphasized the marking capacity of language: a special language of politics clearly identifies rulers and the ruled. In the same manner, languages of finance, of law, of medicine and other specialized fields mark experts and make it easier to distinguish them from the laity. Having a means of a clear demarcation between groups, of identifying persons as powerful or powerless agents, provides enough incentive for rulers to devise a special language (Anderson, 2001, p.113). Anderson's explanation, though plausible, leaves a lot of practices unaccounted for. It assumes a straightforward identification of rulers and the ruled, with the former wearing their power on their verbal sleeves, so to speak. Yet language use in general and language used for political purposes is more complicated. At times, rulers may learn to

speaking the vernacular without the slightest intent to democratize or to mix in with the demos.

A further look at the assumptions that form the foundation of Anderson's discursive theory reveals a lengthy row of questionable leaps. First is the overall expectation that there will be a positive impact emanating from linguistic changes. Clearly, changes in political discourse may have both positive and negative effects as do other social and political changes. Second is the estimated magnitude of the discursive shifts. That is, it is not clear from Anderson's description whether the changes that he discusses affect only the political domain or are part of broader transformations in the Russian language. If the latter is the case, it reduces the political importance of the observed linguistic alterations. Third is the general reference to Russia's population as Russian-speaking without accounting for the multilingual character of the nation in which Russian-speaking politicians could sooner bring the memories of less democratic Soviet times than be associated with the growth of democracy. Fourth is the time needed for change to spread and to replace the old norms and rules of public conversation. In addition, even though control of a nation's subjects is often carried out through discourse, such control is neither obvious nor simple. "Ruling" is often done by a subtler means (exclusion from a conversation, for instance) and harsher (use of force) than a distancing tone. And, finally, the discursive approach proposed by Anderson exhibits features of an overwhelmingly elite theory of democracy. The glaring omission in his account is the language of ordinary people. Does it change when the political realm opens up to include those who do not speak educated Russian? A discursive theory that accounts only for the

language of elites and recognizes only messages directed at the masses can hardly be expected to fulfill its promise of completing the unfinished picture of democratization.

Also, the discourse of political elites is not entirely insulated from everyday speech. Both registers are permeable. Elite discourse is carried over into everyday conversation and politicians themselves bring lay expressions into their discourses. A flow of communication in both directions produces texts in which discursive strands are difficult to disentangle. Furthermore, languages do not replace each other instantaneously. Old linguistic habits die slowly and not at all gracefully. They can linger around even after the new discursive ways have been invented. As Marina Cobb (2002) noted about contemporary Russian discourse, “though more and more people are reluctant to use old bureaucratic clichés, suitable alternatives sometimes simply do not exist and need time to be coined. The outcome is a coexistence of the old politicized talk and new westernized and liberated forms of Russian” (p.20).

CONCLUSION

Today, Russia is neither a democracy in the Deweyan sense of an ethical value and “a way of life” nor is it a dictatorship, observed David William (2006). It lies somewhere in between. If it is a democracy, it is a democracy with a difference.

According to Williams:

The Soviet way of life is gone economically, but many of its ‘mentalities’ remain. Putin’s “managed democracy” has gained rhetorical traction in Russia. He is a popular leader, and his vision of “managed” democracy as growing organically from the history of Russia (p.238).

But what is this difference? What sustains it and what might level it off? My study investigates these broad questions. Mindful of the centrality of a genuine dialogue to democratic discourse, I launched a study that attended to the elite and lay voices in conversation, that assessed the degree of openness, inclusiveness, and tolerance, that evaluated claims and appeals that rise to the surface when one tries to make sense out of contemporary Russian politics. Advancing the discursive theory of democratization, I followed a discourse analytical methodology. The next chapter will outline how I proceeded with this analysis.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

Our conventional understanding of democracy as a government of the people rests on a proposition that in a democracy no one enjoys rights and freedoms that are greater than those of any other individual in that society. Such a view of democracy that connects it to rights and freedoms is widespread among ordinary people in different countries of the world. Yet theoretical models of democracy do not usually recognize rights and freedoms as the central element of a democratic system of government. Procedural democracy and participatory democracy incorporate different ideas about people's empowerment and focus on different systemic elements: one concerned with structures and rules, and the other attending to outcomes of those structures and rules. Stubbornly recurring in political theorizing is the idea that power within the state is to be used to keep people in line, to socialize them, to discipline, to normalize (Brass, 2000, p.317). That is, the dominant conception of power within a state is linked to the exercise of coercion. Within this framework, the challenge facing all governments is how much coercion to allow, how to prevent power abuses, how to distribute power, and who in fact can hold power.

Michel Foucault (1988, 1997) argued that in a modern society the technologies of power have gone beyond the functions that government was initially designed to perform, that is, to collect taxes. Governmentality, a term he used for the art of government and the practice of power maintenance, has extended to almost every detail of a person's life. Unfortunately, people are rarely aware of the way in which their lives are

structured/governed. They are also unaware of the governing myths, some of which include narratives of participation in political life.

As a general problem, government “exploded” in the 16th century, explains Foucault (1991), when the notion of the government of oneself was found applicable to many social spheres: governing of souls under the guidance of the church, the government of the children, and, of course, the government of the state by the sovereign. Eventually, historical processes leading to dismantling of feudalism and establishing of modern states as well as religious movements of Reformation undermined the authority of the Church and that of the sovereign. As a result, the questions of “how to be ruled, how strictly, by whom, to what end, by what methods” emerged with “the peculiar intensity” (p.88). The task of governing fell into the hands of the state. The modern state, says Foucault, is what it is now thanks to the techniques of ruling and the “tactics of government” (p.103). It survived because its capacities and responsibilities were constantly defined and redefined and the line between the private and the public was constantly moved. One of the most important ways in which power is claimed and maintained is via discourse, via the strategic use of language. For example, one of the ways to manipulate people is to assert that some social phenomenon is common sense or an accepted wisdom. Thanks to its techniques of ruling the state endured, but the techniques have become “the only political issue, the only real space for political struggle and contestation” (ibid).

To uncover ways in which power is exercised and people are governed, Foucault proposed a method which he called “archeology” – analyzing layers and traces of thought

and practices that link or separate discourses from one another in different historical periods, and one discipline from another. He summarized the archaeological method as follows: read everything that has been written, said, or otherwise preserved on the topic of concern in the relevant time period. And he meant absolutely everything, ignoring nothing, avoiding isolation of the topic of research from other thoughts or practices of its time. According to Foucault, such a comprehensive grounding of the topic in discourse should help unearth links among bodies of knowledge, institutions, and practices of a given society.

Although in this dissertation I am using the term government rather conventionally, Foucault's views on discourse as a primary technology of power lie at the center of my approach. I expected to see discursive alternations as political and social systems in Russia were being transformed. But with this expectation, I somewhat deviated from Foucault. To him, all governments govern by the same means and utilize similar, pervasive technologies of power. Therefore, there could not be much difference between democratic, authoritarian, or totalitarian governments. I argue that the government of the people and by the people that rises out of disruption of a previous system, that sets a goal of creating new institutions and a new state, may be recognized by innovative techniques, including discursive ones, and may launch what Foucault would name a new "discursive formation." My study is an attempt to find out if this in fact is the case in Russia's transition.

If my expectations of shifts in Russian political discourse are correct, discursive continuity of old patterns would mean the continuity of the rule, regardless of the

statements about embracing democratic ideals made by leaders. Such prospects do not entirely contradict Foucault's idea of governmentality. He did not view the techniques of governing as being set in stone. To the contrary, he believed that "each discourse undergoes constant change as new utterance (enonces) are added to it" (1991, p.53) and that discursive change takes many forms and occurs on many levels, affecting subjects, concepts, and the operation of a discursive formation (p.56) via a variety of means. Yet, Foucault did not see change happening avalanche-style or occurring as "an assault from the outside" (Biesecker, 1992, p.357). Foucauldian change in discourse is always strategic; it is "a practice that works within and against the grain" (ibid) and eventually transforms the "lines of making sense" that operate in a particular historical period.

Open to the possibility of discursive change that does not look like a landslide of norms and rules, I rejected the idea of doing a case study of one political campaign or one political event. Mindful of the time needed for discursive practice to take root, I looked for a discourse with some history. In addition, conducted in a genre of a dissertation, my study did not match Foucault's methodology in the magnitude of its analytical efforts. Instead of conducting an archeological dig, I chose to do some pinpoint drilling, so to speak. To determine whether or not political Russian has become a democratic parlance, I probed and sampled discourse at certain intervals. In doing so, I conducted an exploratory study and not a comprehensive, systemic, archeological description of the discursive indices of democratic change.

Positing that electoral politicians speak differently from politicians of other stripes and convictions, Richard Anderson compared speeches by Russian leaders – Brezhnev,

Gorbachev, and Yeltsin – to find that the language of the latter was perceived as more palatable. Although he ran experiments to test the perceptions by ordinary people, he never attempted to check whether the ordinary people themselves learn to speak new political Russian. As subjects of a non-democratic regime adapting to new political conditions, they should, according to Anderson, develop new identities, those of democratic citizens. Yet in his theorizing, those new identities were strangely muted. In my study, I set out to find whether new political Russian has indeed developed into a language of a government of the people and by the people or whether it has stayed an elitist, in-group jargon. Below, I will explain how I collected data for the study, why I chose to apply critical discourse analysis to make sense of those data, and what procedures I used to interrogate my texts.

WHICH DISCOURSE?

My choice of the site of exploration was guided by several considerations. Of course, one can gain insight into the discursive dynamics of democratic reforms on many arenas. One can listen to economic discussions positing that since poor countries are rarely democratic and long-standing democracies happen to be industrially advanced, democracy's progress will be hard to miss on the economic terrain. Indeed, the World Value Survey made a concession to Russians' unimpressive adoption of democratic values when its economy was literally in ruins. Now that economic indicators are signaling an improvement, and now that some time has passed to allow Russians to gain first-hand experience with democratic institutions, their economic discourse might reveal new forms. Yet, the economic performance of a country does not always correspond to

the political freedoms enjoyed by its citizens or with its democratic standing. Russia seems to have successfully picked up an idiom of capitalism, but its record of speaking democratically has been bemoaned on many occasions. As petro-dollars were pouring in to pay off Russia's international debts, it plunged into new depths of authoritarianism, adding puzzles to our theories of how countries democratize.

Alternatively, one can look at legal discourse and study new laws and new legal formats, like juries in Russia. Legal documents offer a sizable paper trail that would allow a researcher to conduct a diachronic study of changes in the language of law, although that language is spoken predominantly by experts while the public remains relatively unversed in it. My objective of listening to ordinary and elite voices equally would require at a minimum recordings of court's hearings where both types of participants (experts and the lay) are vocal. While it seems remotely possible to obtain such data for a contemporary case of a minor offense, it is less feasible to collect enough material (particularly spoken data) to explore changes in Russian legal discourse over a period of time spanning a decade or so. Russian police archives are notoriously inaccessible, with documents from the 1930s having been released relatively recently and KGB archives still closed.

I used elections as a timeframe for this study because political campaigns are likely to prompt ordinary people to comment on political matters. I expected that during the campaign, the meta-commentary on government, on politicians, and on the fate of democracy in general would be more prominent than in non-campaign times when other issues occupy Russians' hearts and minds. Also, Anderson's discursive theory of

democratization predicted that electoral politicians appeal to the masses more than politicians in non-democratic regimes. Elections should make their attempts to gain popular support even more obvious. Elections also generate abundant discursive data. Campaigning genres – leaflets, TV ads, debates, interviews, and the like – are excellent sources for studies of political Russia. Candidates’ meetings with potential voters make a great place to observe communication between elites and masses, especially when it comes to unedited question and answer sessions. However, because of my interest in tracing change in political discourse over a period of time, I had certain reservations about collecting data from ongoing campaigns via participant-observation methods. Collective data on the ground would have supplied me with rich cotemporary material but would not have assisted me in answering questions about change, unless, of course, the data collection spanned several years.

I also decided against collecting data from face to face interactions. Surveys and interviews that have been a staple methodology in research on Russia’s transition either produced conflicting findings or demonstrated methodological inadequacies. For instance, both methods are prone to errors due to self-presentation factors on the parts of respondents. As many interviewers observed, with democracy turning into a worldwide value, paying “lip service to democracy” has become an almost universal practice (Inglehart, 2003). Under the pressure of social expectations, that is, respondents are often tempted to give what they perceive as correct answers rather than reveal their true feelings and thoughts. Also, questions about political notions and political participation used by survey researchers often confuse respondents. Explains Ellen Carnaghan (2007):

For people who do not spend a lot of time thinking systematically about political life, abstract questions are hard to answer. Even if respondents do answer, analysts cannot be certain what respondents have in mind when they answer very abstract questions, indeed, respondents could have been thinking about very different thing from what the people who wrote the survey question meant to imply (p.79-80).

Thus, surveys and interviews fall easily into the trap of identifying what Dalton (1994) called ‘questionnaire democrats’ rather than discovering those who truly embrace democratic ideals. Because I was looking for arenas where people speak naturally, in a self-motivated way, and extensively, I avoided gathering data through surveys. Because I was also uninterested in hearing a story of democratization exclusively from elites, however diverse their voices might be, I did not use campaign materials.

With these concerns in mind, I turned to newspapers. My choice was guided by several additional considerations. Newspapers offer snapshots of a nation’s current thinking and language use, and they archive those snapshots. They play an important part in a democratic process by providing the public with information and a space for debate. They also carry genres practiced by elites as well as by the masses, represented by editorials and letters-to-the-editor respectively. Although newspapers have recognizable limitations as a source of data on historical events (Franzosi, 1987; Wooley, 2000) and on public opinion (Sigelman & Walkosz, 1992), they often are the only suitable source of information. Coming from newspapers, my data inherit some of these limitations. They are not random. They are mediated in the full sense of the word, reflecting selections

made by journalists and editors. Yet they are still remarkably useful as sources. As Thomas Goodnight (1990) has reminded all media critics, arguments about staying away from the media on the ground that they have been co-opted can be safely ignored. To be effective, dissent has to be rooted in the public sphere, not outside of it; and to argue alternatives, the critic is required to be in contact with the phenomena and practices they criticize (p. 185-186).

I selected three publications for this study: two daily newspapers (*Nezavisimaya Gazeta* and *Izvestiya*) and one weekly (*Ogonyok*)¹. Focusing on these three periodicals, I did not include political parties' publications or the media on either end of the political spectrum because of the very specific groups that they target. I also avoided trade publications like *Krasnaya Zvezda* (covering the military), *Ekonomika i zhizn* (specializing in business, finance, and other economic news), *Trud* (the newspaper of trade unions), and the popular press. Looking for changes in elite and mass communication, I selected editions that have somewhat moderate profiles, yet I did take measures to select publications that cater to different audiences. *Izvestiya* targets educated segments of the Russian population; *Ogonyok* has a popular readership cutting across social groups; and *Nezavisimaya* is oriented toward political activists. Table 1 presents specific features of my selections.

¹ Technically speaking, *Ogonyok* is an illustrated magazine. However, digests of the Russian press and various press monitoring groups (for example, TNS Gallup Group and Russian Target Group Index) list *Ogonyok* among political and social editions without specifying its magazine format. Several other reasons supported my choice of *Ogonyok*: (1) being a weekly, it brought an additional dimension of difference and helped paint a richer picture of the Russian press; (2) it dates back to pre-Soviet Russia and is known its distinct journalistic tradition; and (3) in the early 1980s, it pioneered the letters' page, opening the floodgate of readers' correspondence.

Table 2.1

Data Sources

	Established *	Circulation (as of 01/ 2009)	Volume (pages)	Average Issue Readership (AIR)**
<i>Izvestiya</i>	1917	234,500	16	1.6
<i>Nezavisimaya</i>	1990	40,000	24	0.4
<i>Ogonyok</i>	1899	25,000	52 (A4)	1.5

Note: AIR is calculated in % of Russian (Russian speaking) population aged 10 and over

* Source: Russian Media Atlas (www.mediaatlas.ru), accessed October 10, 2009

** Source: Russian Target Group Index, accessed online June 13, 2007

Izvestiya appeared in St. Petersburg in 1917. It was the first publication of the new Soviet government and continued to be its voice throughout its Soviet history. In contemporary Russia, *Izvestiya* maintains its reputation of high-quality journalism and a centrist political position which, according to its editorial commentary, reflects “the basic principle of independence.” As a newspaper of record, it enjoys wide readership while remaining, in the words of the BBC Monitoring (2008), “a particular favorite among intellectuals and academics,” attracting them with analytical reviews and the breadth of news coverage.

Nezavisimaya Gazeta was founded in 1990 as an alternative to the Soviet press still under the Party’s control at that time. It was meant to be a publication dedicated to social, political and cultural issues in Russia and beyond and aimed to serve a new audience supportive of market reforms and enthusiastic about transformations in the

Soviet lifestyle. It also attracted journalists who wanted to do journalism of a different kind – uncovering truth, reporting transgressions and behind the scene deals, and providing information to the public that the official sources did not carry. It now occupies a prominent position among Russia’s quality press, targeting independent, politically active, and critically thinking Russians. It is also reputed to be “a prestigious platform for politicians, businessmen, and academics” (BBC Monitoring, 2008), although its independence has been recently compromised, with its ownership having shifted from a zealous critic of Vladimir Putin, Boris Berezovsky, to Konstantin Remchukov, a former adviser to the Russian government who promptly appointed himself editor-in-chief in 2007.

Established in 1899, *Ogonyok* has been a major popular publication in Russia and the Soviet Union, attracting the nation’s best writers, reporters, photographers, and satirists for more than a century. It has developed a unique brand of journalism and earned a distinguished place among the Soviet print media. Its issues were passed around, its illustrations were collected and bound into booklets for home collections, the authority of its commentary was much respected, and its materials stirred many public discussions. With the start of perestroika, *Ogonyok*’s fame skyrocketed and its circulation figures stood at about five million copies when, under the leadership of Vitaly Korotich, its then editor-in-chief, *Ogonyok* started publishing letters from its readers. Yet, in the late 1990s, shortages of funding undermined the model under which *Ogonyok* operated, and it collapsed under its own weight. New owners wanted to re-brand *Ogonyok* into a publication for the young and the rich, thus totally reworking its identity. After a series of

change of hands and of editors during which entire genres disappeared from its pages, *Ogonyok* adopted a new, glossier look but preserved its critical slant.

In order to capture public discussions of both pre- and post-elections issues, I collected letters to the editor and editorials for nine weeks within each election year, beginning with the announcement of the presidential campaign and ending four weeks after the votes were cast. For the year 1996, in which the elections saw two rounds, the time frame was extended to 13 weeks. All texts were captured online using the East View database and double-checked for appearance in the All-Russia editions. An additional consideration guided my sampling procedures. To prevent oversampling from dailies, I included a maximum of four letters to the editor and a maximum of two editorial pieces per week from any publication. Following these procedures, I obtained 294 letters to the editor and 212 editorials (see Table 2), with the total word count exceeding 100,000 words in each sub-corpus.

Table 2.2

Data by Year

		1996	2000	2004	2008	TOTAL
LETTERS	n	74	89	68	63	294
	%	25.17	30.27	23.13	21.43	100.00
EDITORIALS	n	67	44	47	54	212
	%	31.60	20.75	22.17	25.47	100.00

WHY CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS?

Among several brands of discourse analysis that are currently practiced, I chose critical discourse analysis inspired by the works by Norman Fairclough (1992, 2000), Ruth Wodak (1989, 2001), and Teun van Dijk (1993, 2002). Unlike other discourse analysts, Fairclough, for instance, emphasizes the presence of non-discursive elements and non-discursive aspects of any social practice. A recognition of non-discursive factors is particularly important for my study. Following Fairclough, I am not claiming that discourse is everything and that discursive change is all there is to political regime change. Focusing on the political discourse of a transitional democracy, I do not discard, diminish, or replace the institutional component of democratization or its human elements, that is, the values, beliefs, attitudes, and behavior of the people who live through the process and enact change. Rather, I share a conviction successfully expressed by Glynos et al (2009) that political institutions can be conceptualized as “more or less sedimented systems of discourse,” linking together rules, norms, resources, practices and subjectivities in particular ways (p.8). The idea of their ‘sedimentation’ rejects the view of institutions being established outside political practice. Instead, they appear as a result of a political process. This makes institutions malleable and subject to change via discursive practices.

Another feature of Fairclough’s approach to discourse important to my study is an emphasis on intertextuality, that is, on the re-use of prior texts and discourses. Intertextuality helps explain the existence of textual and discursive “hybrids” in which “different discursive types are mixed together” (Fairclough, 1992). Through the analysis

of discursive strands woven together, one can trace both the reproduction of old discourses (read, institutions) and innovations brought about by new combinations of elements (Phillips & Jorgenson, 2002, p. 7). Two considerations speak to the necessity of an intertextual analysis in discursive studies of democratization. One is the time it takes for discursive change to take place, and the second is the relative continuity of political culture. Given the magnitude of contemporary social change, one can expect the Soviet style of talking politics to be lingering for some time, mixing with new elements. But what groups use that style? What practices does that discourse sustain? What roles and relations does it reproduce? Attention to recycled elements of previously dominant discourses can also highlight pockets of resistance to new political and social practices.

To emphasize, for critical discourse analysts, discourse is a form of a social practice that contributes to the construction of social identities, social relations, and systems of knowledge (Phillips & Jorgenson, 2002, p. 66-67). Through discursive outlets people identify with and connect to others, reinforcing or transforming each other's outlooks. Unlike linguistic and linguistically-oriented analyses, the discourse analytical approach attends both to the processes and conditions that shaped 'what was said/written' and to new conditions created in and by discourse. For instance, for a discourse analyst, it is not enough to know what motivated the speaker, what experiences s/he brought to bear on the form and content of the message, what resources were tipped into and/or marshaled to create the message, and what characteristics of the audience (hostile, friendly, ignorant, or otherwise) conditioned the use of arguments. Discourse analysis continues to explain the effect and the outcome of interaction, the new friendships or

animosities that were started, the transformations in perspectives, identities, and attitudes that occurred, the ideas that were put forward, accepted or discarded, new knowledge that emerged and old knowledge that was buttressed and fortified.

In this analytical tradition, the term *text* refers, most commonly, to the record of discursive processes. Texts can be written or spoken, but they have some kind of unity that make them recognizable as whole. Text is never simply a 'thing.' It is always related to socially determined and socially determining discursive practices. The two terms - text and discourse - are complementary. As Stillar (1998) noted, "we meet discourses through instances of texts" (p.12). Discourse, in its turn, is primarily concerned with participants, particular kinds of situations, and social systems that bear upon how and what a text can mean to those involved (ibid). Charles Fillmore once famously said that "a sentence is a life drama." These dramas, however, do not unfold between verbs and nouns or dangling modifiers. They occur between real people and are referenced/pointed at by sentences.

Fairclough's version of critical discourse analysis advocates a synthesis of three types of analysis: a description of the formal properties of a text, an interpretation of processes through which the text was produced, and an explanation of the social practice in which the text is involved. These three rungs of analysis do not form a rigid progression of stages, though. Instead, the analysis can start at any level and develop in any direction, as long as in the end it reveals the effects of discourse on social identities, social relationships, and on systems of knowledge and belief (Fairclough, 1992, p. 64-65).

I submitted each text in my sample to the tripartite analysis asking questions about discourse participants, their relations, and the social action performed via their writing. Since a single word, phrase or grammatical construction on its own may suggest the existence of a particular discourse, I paid particular attention to linguistic elements. I looked for repetitions and recurring patterns, following advice by Stubbs that “repeated patterns or constructions may trigger a cultural stereotype” (2001, p.215). Discourse analyst Blommaert (2005) emphasized the same idea when he noted that a lot of human communication is not a matter of choice but is “constrained by normativities” which in their turn are “determined by patterns of inequality” (p. 99). Starting my analysis with registering “normativities,” I explored such linguistic features as metaphors, set-phrases, recurring buzz-words, and attempts at verbal decorum (the use of high style, learned, and bookish vocabulary as opposed to the low style of criminal argot and curse words). I noted clusters of tense forms (expressions of the future vs. expressions of the past) and modal verbs of uncertainty as well as those of order and obligation. I considered forms of address, greeting lines and closing conventions, speech acts like blaming, praising, complaining, requests, and demands.

Taking each text for a fragment of a larger discourse, I asked of it several sets of questions. My first set dealt with questions related to discourse participants and identities.

- 1) *Speakers/writers*: How do authors (letter-writers and editorialists) identify themselves? What roles do they cast themselves in? Are they moralists, claimants, or bystanders? What political stance do they take: self-standing individuals, group

representatives, or none at all? Do they display themselves as insiders in the political world? Do they highlight their links to ordinary people?

- 2) *Audience*: What kind of audience do the writers imagine? Supportive? Argumentative? Indifferent? Polite? What kind of audience responds to their messages? In what way do the authors hope to move their audience: to mobilize it to some action, to pacify it, to elicit a sympathetic comment, or other?
- 3) *Motivation and purpose*: What motivates people to write to a newspaper? What do they aspire to accomplish via their writing? What topics do they discuss? What topics do they avoid? To whose attention do they bring their stories?

My second set of questions explored relationships between participants and the character of their exchange.

- 4) *Interaction and engaging patterns*: Do the writers maintain distance between themselves and their audience or do they attempt to reduce it? In what way do the writers engage their audience? Do they ask questions? Do they call onto their readers? Do they address anyone directly? Do they argue with their audience? Entertain it? Criticize it? Inform it? Do they carry out a dialogue and listen to the other side or do they draw enough satisfaction from stating their own opinion publicly?
- 5) *Tone*: Does their conversation reveal trust, respect, tolerance among participants or does their tone signal different kind of relations? To what norms of politeness do they comply? Do they come across as assertive or doubtful?

Finally, I asked questions to gain insight into the social practice and the broader context in which the editorial pieces were composed and letters were written and sent out to the newspapers.

- 6) *The outside situation*: Do ordinary people and the elites share perceptions of the outside world? Is that world stable or changing? How do they perceive change to be happening? Who is marked as a change agent? Who is identified as an authority? How is authority achieved? What relations do they seem to have with the newspapers? With the readers?
- 7) *Social practice*: How is writing related to other activities that writers in each group are involved? Do they see writing as a political or a personal act? Does writing serve as a self-expression or is it seen as accomplishing some common good? What rules guide their writing? What norms and conventions do they follow? What norms and conventions do they break? What do they hold dear to their hearts? What would they agree to let go in their world? What powers/capacities do the writers attribute to themselves? To their audience? To others? What responsibilities do they take upon themselves? What responsibilities do they assign to others? What larger narrative do they participate in – that of a great nation, a normal country, a deprived/betrayed people, or some other?
- 8) *Public forum*: Do the letter-writers enact a public forum? If yes, in what ways? If not, what other function can be attributed to the press? In what way does their writing contribute to that function? What larger function do the editorialists see themselves performing – shaping public opinion, framing current issues, setting

the agenda, entertaining the public, informing them, whistle-blowing, or some other?

Since discourse analysis does not usually employ coding, my ‘coding’ was provisional as well. I listed topics I found in texts rather than approached the data with a roster of possible topics. Reading the texts, I ignored nothing, although not everything I noticed turned out to be a consistent element.

Like other practitioners of critical discourse analysis, I focused on the role of discourse in reproducing and/or challenging dominant power relations. In other words, I started with a theory of power in mind and explored my data to see how discourse promoted or undermined the power of one group (the elite) over another (the masses). Because I was interested in mapping out discursive change, I necessarily looked for a point in time to anchor my observations. I compared my findings to descriptions of Soviet political discourse constructed by previous research (Butler, 1964; Gorham, 2003; Remington 1988; Wolfe, 2005). The following chapters will present my findings and discuss the extent to which they conformed to or deviated from the discursive practices of the early days of glasnost and perestroika.

CHAPTER THREE

RHETORICAL MARKERS OF POLITICAL CHANGE

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia found itself amidst “rhetorical crises of rare magnitude,” we have been told. Its ‘instant democracy’ lacked the social, cultural, or political traditions of deliberative public discourse. It did not have individuals properly trained to establish such traditions. In short, it was missing a “culture of democratic communication,” an unfortunate enough circumstance to bear upon the transformation of political and economic systems from Soviet-style government to democracy. Institutional changes alone, rarely sufficient on their own, as Chapter 1 pointed out, were destined to be half-measures in the Russian context in many people’s view. The country “required a revolution in human spirit,” a transformation from the mentality of the Homo Sovieticus to democratic “habits of mind” (Williams, 2006, p.227).

I ended Chapter 1 with a summary of the discursive theory of democratization and an outline of the rhetorical dimensions of democratic governance: an open and inclusive public sphere, dialogue and debate as preferred communicative forms, rational argumentation, tolerance of uncertainty of outcomes, and a preference for informal language. I also listed major propositions of the discursive theory of democratization - still in nascent form - that explains relations between the informal (vernacular) language in politics and political identities. In Chapter 2 I described my methodology for taking studies of democratic discourse past the point where Richard Anderson left them. To proceed, this chapter will first present a short overview of Soviet political language and

the discursive regime of the late socialism as a background to the discursive change that came later. In it, I will focus on the roles and relations of speakers and their audiences and on the functions that language was called to play in public communication. I then present a short summary of the institutional change that occurred in Russia since 1985, and proceed with the projections of the discursive counterpart to those political and social transformations.

THE WOODEN LANGUAGE OF SOVIET POLITICS

The *discursive regime of late socialism* was distinct from all previous periods in that the ideological talk of the Communist party, frozen in ritualistic formulas, was copied from one situation to another so diligently and inevitably that in the end it got decoupled from the ideals and values that it once represented (Yurchak, 2003, p.481). This decoupling, suggests Yurchak, enabled the collapse of socialism in the last days of the Soviet Union. But the country was not always a barren rhetorical land where symbolic forms were empty shells and where ritualistic masks were put up for public appearances. To the contrary, Soviet public discourse *knew a multitude of genres*: public lectures, discussion clubs, public readings of fiction and poetry, numerous newspapers and periodicals, conferences, meetings, and rallies, and the like. Soviet citizens participated in various groups, panels, committees, chapters, unions, directorates, and councils. In other words, there was no shortage of communication and rhetoric, both written and oral, and Soviet public discourse was far from homogeneous (Butler, 1964). Yet its one-sidedness could not have been lost on a shrewd observer: that multitude of genres expressed a single worldview and promulgated one ideology only, that of Marxism-Leninism. Any

mention of a western philosophy, work of art, or an idea appeared with an attribute of 'bourgeois,' and its discussion could only be justified if it disclosed the capitalist exploitation of the working class. Rhetoric retained its persuasive dimension and was widely practiced to mobilize millions of Soviet people under the banner of communism. The party's ideological *instruktory* (literary, instructors or trainers, as they were called in Russian) oversaw tremendous programs of ideological training and used their talents to convince people of the wisdom of Soviet leadership and to persuade them to "dedicate their lives to the project of building Communism" (p. 231). Yet their rhetoric knew no freedom of invention. The pool from which a speaker or a writer could borrow was severely limited to 'correct' examples and 'correct' approaches, of which there was one. Soviet rhetors were free to promote communist ideas but they were not allowed to support ideas of any other philosophical system. Schooled in a climate that ruled out most intellectual initiatives, Homo Sovieticus, as Soviet masses were informally referred to in the last days of the Soviet Union, could only express ideas and slogans pre-approved by the party. Jeffrey Brooks aptly summarized the effects of Soviet rhetoric on the people in the following way: "... decades of constrained formulaic commentaries about politics, nationality, ethnicity, human rights, and the economy shaped the consciousness and memory of people in post-communist societies and now limit current attempts to understand those and other vital issues" (cited in Wolfe, 2005, p.9).

The rhetoric of the party, as it turns out, was used to ends diametrically opposite to those pursued in a democracy, namely, it was not employed to instruct the subjects in their decision-making and develop them as citizens. Speech was strictly regulated,

heavily censored, and closely monitored as an instrument of control over the people. Moreover, as Butler (1964) noted, the flow of communication in the Soviet Union was always ‘downward’ (p.230). Multiple fora that existed in the Soviet Union were not used to make decisions; rather, discussions were the ways to implement an official policy, to apply decisions already made above, or to transmit them down to the subordinates. The party produced correct ideological commentary and monitored texts circulating in society for ideological soundness and adherence to the Leninist doctrine. A message by the government was final and its verdict not discussible (Young & Launer, 2002). After the government had spoken, the story died down (p.447).

The language itself was viewed by the Party as a tool of production (Yurchak, 2003). What was produced was a new Soviet person, representations of whom were disseminated by the mass media in a never-ending chain of stories about the superiority of the Soviet way of life. The news reports provided illustrations of the infallibility of the Marxist interpretations of the reality and, as Young & Launer (2002) noted, served as “proof that the postulates of the socialist state generally, and the current administration particularly, were correct” (p.446). Such a use of the news genre fell in line with the overall epideictic function of Soviet journalism (Janack, 1996), that praised the party leadership and blamed capitalist greed and bourgeois ideology for the majority of grievances in the world.

Because the right side of the argument was pre-determined, there was no need to engage in deliberation, negotiation, or other forms of contestation. In fact, *no search for truth was needed*. True knowledge had already been discovered by Marxist classics. The

job of the rhetor was “to bring the fruits of Marxist analysis to the people” (Kenez, 1985) acting as an honest transmitter of the truth. Explains Butler,

...a journalist, teacher, or speaker has no right to be impartial and no obligation to display an objective concern for events. Information has little value its own right, but takes its meaning from its role in the class war, from its utility in educating the workers (p. 231)

In such an environment, as the roles of the speaker/writer were structured to serve the global cause of the state, so were the roles of the audience. *The audience was expected to listen, not to debate. It was brought together* to reaffirm, not to interpret the party’s message. And their re-affirmation was expected to be unanimous. A giant ideological apparatus of the state worked to condition the masses to a single type of response (Butler, 1964, p. 231). The lay population *participated in a ritual* enacted via frozen ideological formulas. Explains Yurchak,

In line with the party claims, the Soviet people unanimously reproduced the system on the level of form: they participated in mass organizations, voted in favor of official resolutions, publicly manifested support at mass rallies and fulfilled official plans in numbers and reports (2003, p.504).

Yet, it would be wrong to assume that the goal of the ritual was always to express support for the regime. Often, participation in the ritualistic behavior (such as voting at a meeting) was a ritual of social belonging, of maintaining group status, of understanding the social context that Soviet citizens learned to navigate, reading between the lines, sifting through formulaic language, and separating the private from the public. A hand

raised at the meeting was a confirmation of such an understanding rather than an expression of agreement with the literal meaning of the party's declarations (Yurchak 2003, p.485). The majority complied with existing rules and participated in rituals without being die-hard communists because those who did not want to play accordingly (that is, argued, expressed doubts, cited foreign sources, brought counter-evidence, etc) were quickly ostracized as anti-Soviet elements. As Linz (2000) reminds us, actions inconsistent with totalitarian goals are often treated as crimes against the state because a totalitarian regime "refuses to recognize a distinction between public and private life" (cited in Rose & Munro, 2002, p.19). Mastering the code of Soviet speak required a skilful *use of ideological building blocks*. A message was to be constructed rather than a thought expressed or an emotion conveyed. The invention process, says Yurchak (2003), was reduced to what he calls "block-writing." A message could literally be constructed out of preexisting blocks (p. 491). If the Greek idea of commonplaces could ever be taken to the extreme, Soviet ideology workers succeeded in reaching that point. Their content was packaged in recognized, replicable, and ideologically correct phrases. The models were few and worked for all situations. Among their many functions, these frozen phrases minimized individual responsibility for the message: if one followed the rules and inserted appropriate quotes from Marxist classics, one could not be in the wrong. On the other hand, if one chose to experiment and deviate from the prescribed format, one could easily be found guilty of neglecting the ideological authority of the party.

Ideological formulas that colonized Soviet political language and turned it into a code did not disappear overnight when the party's ideological grip was relaxed and

alternative sources of information were allowed. Six years after perestroika had been launched and the policies of glasnost were announced, Michael Urban (1998b) observed that the language and discursive practices of Russian top politicians were still “remarkably uniform” (p. 109). Among the central elements of that code were slogans and ideology-ridden passages, catch phrases and emotionally charged language in place of arguments, speaking on behalf of all people posing as a “vessel from which flows an alleged general will” and “envelop[ing]” one’s own thoughts in the “urgency of national purpose” (p.122-23).

Fortunately for the sanity of the nation, the hyper-structured official realm and the formulaic language of Soviet politics reinforced its opposite – the private language of the population. Scholars of the totalitarian regime in Eastern Europe even claim that there existed an anti-language opposing the official propaganda (Wierzbicka, 1990). One of these studies argued that “in conditions where the censorship ruthlessly suppresses any expression of free thought and of criticism, only one area is left which is not subject to that control – the live colloquial popular [nadorny] language” (Koscinskij 1980, cited in Wierzbicka, 1990). Another study (Zaslavsky & Fabris, 1982) pointed out that restrictions on spontaneous, unregulated public dialogue produced “a very sharp gap” between the spheres of official and private communication. Norms and expectations in language in the two spheres became so different that one can speak of “the emergence of something like political diglossia in the Soviet Russian language” (ibid, p.2).

A constant navigation between the public and the private, between declamations of the superior achievements of the Soviet way of life and the sad reality could not but

produce generations of double-thinkers. Elites as well as the masses took double-thinking for granted. Soviet society transformed into what Shlapentokh (1989) calls an “hourglass society,” in which elites and the masses inhabited separate spheres and locked their private opinions in an air-tight circle of the most trusted friends and family. It is this practice of double-standards for private and public life that finally emptied the public language of its content, “decoupling,” as Yurchak put it, the form from ideas. Decoupled symbols continued to be replicated in a ritualistic manner, but as soon as the Soviet leadership (in an attempt to revamp socialism) allowed independent interpretation of symbols, the system not only stopped working but vanished into thin air. Boundaries and false dichotomies imposed by the regime turned out to be “chimerical” (Urban, 1997, p.79). The cure proposed by Gorbachev to save socialism proved “deadlier than the disease” (Anderson et al 1995, p.869) when people started expressing political ideas incompatible with the earlier doctrine, when they began forming informal groups with political programs and claiming back the political arena. To better understand the forces that shaped Russian political discourse in transition and the trajectory that Russian political rhetoric followed, I will now turn to a brief overview of structural transformations in Russian political system since the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 – the non-discursive factors, as I referred to them in Chapter 2 - that impacted the roles and relations among the various political actors.

NONDISCURSIVE ASPECTS OF DEMOCRATIZATION

Authoritarian rule, first of czars and later of communist party leaders, has been a feature of the political life in Russia for so long that some observers even claim that

Russians are culturally predisposed to authoritarianism and that a political system based on a different set of rules is unimaginable there. Contrary to those evaluations, in the late 1980s, new political ideas spread over the nation. The Soviet leadership proposed policies that “represent[ed] a qualitative break with past political practices” (McFaul, 2001, p.1). The enthusiasm for perestroika and a quick conversion of the Soviet Union into a democracy of a western type was soaring, even if ill-conceived. Attempts to break away from the tenets of the old system in no time did not bring immediate results. First, an instantaneous shift to a market economy and democratic rule proved impossible. Second, transformations started without careful strategic calculations in hand. Reforming a huge country by a probing method – an attempt here, a dare there –led to an escalation of uncertainty. Third, as Judith Devlin (1995) remarked, “when the lid was finally lifted off Soviet society,” in the pot sat not “an embryonic replica of a western society” but a mixture of “nasty ingredients” such as proto-fascism, anti-Semitism, creeping chauvinism, and a legacy of lawlessness (p.2).

To be sure, reforms did produce a lot of positive change, and Russians today do not want the old times back. With the start of Gorbachev’s reforms, politics was brought back to Russia. Open debate in the public sphere was re-established. Severe restrictions on freedom of speech and associations were relaxed. The criminal code was changed to narrow definitions of anti-Soviet behavior, which reduced a number of activities qualifying as political crime. Numerous informal groups and circles of ‘other-thinkers’ sprang into being around the country and quickly developed into social movements that

advocated for various social and, later, political issues (Sakwa, 1998, p.207-8).²

Gradually, the political system opened to competition, and Russians went to the polling station, voting for one of several candidates. Following the coup of August 1991, a new Russia and its first president embarked upon economic transformations that would underpin political reforms, and on “the credit side of the balance sheet,” as Murrell (1997) phrased it, appeared a market economy, economic and legal reforms (a new tax code and a new land code).

While these accomplishments are undeniable, “blemishes” are multiple as well (Aslund. 1999, p.2). The North Caucasus region remains the most troubled spot. Almost all arenas of Russian politics – legislatures, the party system, civil society, the media - lack liberal qualities (McFaul. 2001). Independent media have recently been “reined in” or taken over by Putin’s loyalists, state power is being systematically centralized, regional governments have lost much of their wriggle room (ibid). During Yeltsin’s years, the power of the president rose and the presidency tilted toward authoritarianism. It continues to be the principal Russian political institution. Vladimir Putin influences Russia’ future the most, even if he does not appear on the front page anymore. Entirely successful as a stabilizer, he closed Yeltsin’s chapter of “revolutionary convulsions” and secured the support of the majority of the Russian people. His approval ratings are consistently reported to break the 70 percent mark, and most Russian citizens support the regime although they recognize how poorly democracy is practiced these days (Urban, Igrunov, and Mitrokhin, 1997, p.310).

² By 1989, the informal groups in the Soviet Union made about 60,000 organizations, associations, clubs, and societies, reports O’Kane (2004, p.199).

Did the political transformations in Russia make a full circle? Answers to this question range from disheartening to hopeful. Some believe that Russia is now democratic although disorderly (Rose et al, 2008); others posit that it has halted on the way to democracy, unable to carry a load of its authoritarian legacy any further (Shevtsova, 2000, 2007); yet, another group of Russia's students claim that Russian elites are faking democracy by setting up conventional trappings while preserving the old rules of the game (Wilson, 2005). There are also those who are convinced that Russia has folded down democratic reforms and started on the road back. In the remainder of this section, I will describe the four positions regarding the state of democracy that have been circulating in the Russian democratization literature: a weak democracy, an arrested democracy, a sham democracy, and a cancelled democracy. Although their proponents differ on the assessment of the current situation, their criticism does not advance a logically possible position that nothing has changed in Russia.

Compared to other post-communist states of Eastern and Central Europe that have recently democratized, Russia has been in transition from one type of regime to another for a much longer period and produced a *weak* democracy by the most generous estimate. While most successful transitions have happened quickly, dismantling the old and building the new political institutions, Russia found itself in a prolonged gap between the end of the old and the beginning of the new (McFaul, 2001b, p.3). The end of communist rule did not automatically lead to the establishment of democratic rule. Some powerful Soviet institutions disappeared almost overnight (for example, agencies responsible for centralized planning, ideological control and supervision, organizations like Komsomol

and Young Pioneers). Some new institutions have been formed (a parliament, a president, free press). But not all old institutions vanished. Security services and the military - two pillars of the Soviet regime - remain virtually un-restructured (Rutland, 2004, p. 6). It also remains true that most of Russia' current leaders were raised, trained, and selected under the Soviet regime and through the only legitimate channel available then – the ranks of the Communist Party. They quickly learned the new rules of the electoral game and rewrote some of them to their own advantage. As Nikolai Petrov notes, results of the first (1989) and second (1990) elections “profoundly affected the Soviet nomenklatura, leading, however, to its modification rather than its demise” (cited in Rutland, p. 7-8). With such transitional experience, Russia, predict Rose and Munro (2002), “could be trapped in the twilight zone between electoral and liberal democracy for a long time” (p.309). Because this ‘twilight zone’ is not entirely dark and hopeless, they consider Russia disorderly, although democratic (Rose & Munro, p.40). It is democratic in filling many offices in the land through elections; it is disorderly because “affairs of state are not subject to the rule of law” (ibid.), at least not yet. Responding to the pessimistic view of Russian democratization as having gone in the wrong direction, McFaul (2001b), for one, describes Russian democracy as “a cause not lost.” He points out:

The current Russian political system has many attributes of an unconsolidated democracy or electoral democracy, while still lacking the features of a liberal democracy. The distribution of formal powers between the president and parliament is too skewed in favor of the president. Russia's party system, civil society, and rule of law are underdeveloped. The crude military methods being

deployed to “fight terrorism” in Chechnya suggests that respect for basic human rights of all Russian citizens still does not exist within the Russian state or society. Yet this system exhibits qualities of stability. In Russia today, all major actors demonstrate an interest in the institutions of democracy. No major group believes that it will be better off by deviating from electoral and constitutional rules. Different actors want to change the specific form of the constitution and the specific rules governing elections, but no major political force has an incentive to violate these basic democratic rules of the game of Russia’s polity (p. 163).

A close view of democracy in Russia recognizes the incompleteness of its political institutions and on these grounds does not allow Russia into the company of its fully-fledged liberal counterparts. Elections have been installed but the development of civic society has been *halted* and a priority has been given to state-building. The path-dependency argument that sees the future as stemming from past practices and future actions as constrained by the institutions established beforehand foresees little hope for Russia. Having built semi-democratic institutions, they are now bound to have semi-democratic outcomes. Advocates of Russian democracy as stalled/halted/arrested and the like often look for causal explanations in the nation’s past. Russia, point out Rose and Munro (2002), has not been governed as a modern state, by the rule of law, although for centuries it has met minimal requirements of state-hood as it had institutions to “monopolize the power of coercion within a given territory” (p.41). While rhetorically a ‘new beginning’ could be offered, hardly anyone presiding over Russia can bypass its

legacy of undemocratic rule and aspire to build a democracy without fixing state matters first. To cite McFaul (2001b) again:

Factors that enhance the stability of Russian democracy do not necessarily improve the quality of its democracy. On the contrary, the factors that produce path dependency regarding the basic rules of electoral democracy can also lock in illiberal institutions. Because the agenda of change is much narrower today and the balance of power does not offer any major group the opportunity or temptation to seize (or maintain) power by other means, electoral democracy has become “the only game in town.” (p.168)

Recently, Russian scholars have started seeing the future in much grimmer tones. While nondemocratic practices - some of them transitional, others lingering from the communist past – are likely to make a democratic path an alternative rather than an inevitable course, recent developments in institution-building in Russia led scholars to believe that the transition not simply failed or stalled but has never been attempted in earnest. The Russian leadership, according to Shevtsova (2006, 2007), merely *imitates democracy* instead of working to ingrain democratic principles in new institutions. She locates the failure of democratic development in the adoption of a new constitution in October 1993, which created in Russia a form of super-presidentialism. As a result, the political regime that has emerged confirms a description once put forward by Larry Diamond (2002) that post-totalitarian regimes nowadays feel “unprecedented pressure to adopt or at least mimic the democratic form” (p.24). In Russia, this pressure led to creating institutions that are democratic on the surface but that are run by an authoritarian means (Shevtsova,

2007, p.2). Under these conditions, elections are not and cannot be truly competitive, explains Shevtsova, because democratic forms serve as “stage props” fabricated to “engross” viewers and actors themselves (ibid). On a similar note of disillusionment with the post-Soviet practices, Andrew Wilson (2005) argues that Russian is a case of virtual democracy, a regime that exhibits democratic features only in “virtual reality,” that is, in a reality concocted by *polit-tekhology*. The cynicism of Russian politicians, insists Wilson, can only be understood in terms of its deep roots in the Soviet era and, more specifically, in the organizational culture and methods of the secret police which, unlike other Soviet institutions, have not been seriously affected by transformation and that have survived the turbulent times of perestroika (ibid).

The prospects for imitation/virtual/fake democracies to eventually change and become true democracies are minimal because they are in a transition to nowhere - their leaders know precisely where they are and what they are doing. In Russia, claims Shevtsova, one should speak not about the collapse of democracy or of a stalled transition but about “the deliberate use of democratic institutions as Potemkin villages³ in order to conceal traditional power arrangements.” As Ivan Krastev has put it, Russia is “an illiberal democracy by design” (Shevtsova, 2007, p.2). Stephen Kotkin makes a similar case for considering the period 1970-2000 as a coherent whole because of its central theme of “the privatization of public office and the neglect of the public interest” that runs across the three decades (cited in Wilson, p.18).

³ In the 18th century, Grigory Potemkin, a close friend of tsarina Catherine the Great, constructed makeshift villages along the route the empress was touring in the newly conquered territories in the south in order to make her believe that the land was wealthy and the subjects were happy.

Trapped in several double binds and having postponed the building of its democratic institutions in favor of state-building, Russia, as some predict, will continue the course *away from democracy* and toward authoritarianism, a course fostered by President Putin. That course could either lead to a return to the old practices or to a more enlightened authoritarianism, but not to a more democratic society. Russian political scientist Petrov (2006), for example, posits that, under Putin Russia regressed politically almost to the point where it was a decade and a half ago. In his opinion, even the term ‘managed democracy’ does not adequately describe Russia any more. However, with the tightly controlled media, a powerless parliament, suppressed opposition, and manipulated elections, Russian authorities realize that their communication with ordinary people is deeply problematic; hence, numerous trials to set up a feedback mechanism in the shape of offices for public grievances (*obschestvennye priemnye*), mediated dialogues of authorities with the people (*telemosty* and question and answer programs), or a national consultative body (*Obschestvennaia Palata*) whose objective is to simulate feedback that under normal conditions is provided by civic society and mechanisms that channels of public opinion (pp. 1-2).

DEMOCRATIZATION AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Any regime needs support (willing or unwilling) of the subjects in its authority. Transitions to democracy – a regime predicated upon the will of the people – highlight the need for mobilization of the public and the public opinion. Laying out the discursive theory of democratization, Richard Anderson pointed out that to succeed and win voters electoral politicians have to talk to the people. What exactly in their talk wins the hearts

and minds of the people and what puts them off remained a black-box portion of Anderson's theorizing. Apart from mentioning the shortening distance due to the use of vernacular language, he did not venture into detailed studies of how democratic political communication works. In this section, I will outline discursive processes supportive of democratic politics that could be expected in Russian political discourse.

Up to a point, the totalitarian aspiration of Communist rulers for a public show of total support was successful as long as public opinion was kept private. For them, the masses were potential opponents that could not be trusted and that had to be insulated from the elites. For the people, leaders were distant characters over whom they had no real control. The real political culture in the Soviet Union, despite the powers that were allegedly given to ordinary people, was teaching a "lesson in powerlessness." Politics was something that *they* at the top did and that we, ordinary folks, did not and could not comprehend. In an hour-glass society, as Shkapentokh (1989) calls the Soviet Union, the elite managed the direction of the regime from above, while at the bottom the subjects sought to minimize contact with rulers, worked around politics, limiting their involvement, for the most part, with matters of household interest.

The feedback that would tell the Soviet leaders the extent to which they were actually successful in mobilizing the public was frequently unreliable. Channeled through party apparatchiks, who had many incentives to boost numbers and to present a picture rosier than it really was, the evidence of popular support (for instance, election results) was frequently 'adjusted' to demonstrate a greater turnout. But these cooked data were more than lies. It is highly unlikely that Soviet leaders were so gullible as to take those

estimates of public support at face value. They did not use those reports directly to inform their policy decisions; instead, shows of support were used strategically as a social proof to demonstrate to doubting souls how wrong and deviant their position was (Rose et al, 2008, p.57).

The collapse of the Soviet Union meant, among other things, new roles for political actors that had not previously existed. The former Soviet Union was a place where capitalism had been eliminated and where powerful entrepreneurs could not have arisen. In contemporary Russia, 'biznes-elita' has emerged (Zimmerman, 2002, p.12). The shock of transformation also undermined old beliefs about the relationship between the government and the people and forced ordinary people to re-think what the government demands and whether they should support it (Tishkov & Olcott, 1999, p.61). Unsurprisingly, then, since the collapse of the Soviets Union, there has been an explosion of popular forms of engagement as well as disengagement. Research aimed at understanding how Russians respond to democratization found that they are not of one mind politically. Some Russians are supportive of the regime, while others express opposing views.

The extremes forms in which the mobilization of support for the Soviet regime was practiced made it impossible to intensify those efforts any further. The old practices "ensured" that new mobilization efforts are applied only in a post-totalitarian direction (Rose et al, 2008, p. 55). The population that survived the darkest days of totalitarian rule would immediately sense a technique favored by old rulers and would shy away from those who adopted it anew. Distancing themselves from old times, reformers could gain

advantage in the power contest. In the Soviet case, this strategy also meant abandoning the 'wooden language' of Soviet-speak and adopting the vernacular, encouraging the audience to think of themselves as citizens engaged in a common project.

When the Soviet Union dissolved and Russia became a sovereign state, there was no shortage of new symbols to create. The tri-color flag was raised over the Kremlin to symbolize the start of new times. The new Constitution replaced the one under which the country had lived since 1978. The new coat of arms and the anthem followed. Ordinary Russians were ready to leave behind ideological symbols of the Soviet era. In a survey of 1992, less than a quarter of respondents expressed a positive feeling toward Marxism-Leninism or socialism while 75 percent felt positive about freedom and glasnost (Urban et al, 1997, p.27)

The very interaction in a contest over political symbols is a way in which political subjects shape themselves. At the core of glasnost, argues Urban, was that very interaction (p.77). In other words, reforms that started in the Soviet Union in 1985 aimed not only at straightening out the party apparatus and speeding up the juggernaut of the Soviet economy, but also creating new political subjects and designing new ways of communication among them. Among its many dimensions, perestroika had a very significant symbolic side and reformers had to learn new ways of interacting with their audiences and new ways of mobilizing their support.

But have the elite practices of dealing with the masses changed as Russia has undergone a shock therapy of reforms? Have the new elites consented to making people powerful, as the democratic label suggests? Extreme views of the mass-elite

communication in Russia are not hard to find. Andrew Wilson (2005), for one, claims that the vernacular Russian used to make the political world more accessible in the early days of perestroika, is long gone. The Soviet practice of deceit “has moved back;” the new politics “ape” common language although not for the purpose of shortening the distance between the rulers and the ruled but as an instrument “dedicated to deception” (p.40). Following the logic of the four democratic scenarios - weak, halted, fake, and cancelled – the section below will present four versions of what political discourse might look like within each of those democratic “models.”

As my discussion of the divergent assessments of the democratic reforms has shown, two scenarios of democratic change never showed up: (1) that Russia was now a vibrant democracy and (2) that nothing had changed. If, contrary to those estimates, Russia is indeed a healthy democracy, its discursive practices would show that both elites and masses embrace the democratic way of life. Public officials would seek consultation with the people. A nationwide debate of policy issues would take place before any major policy decisions would be made. Any topic regarding collective life would be openly discussed. Information necessary for the public to make informed decisions would be accessible. To prevail, views and opinions would have to be backed up with strong arguments. Social status would play a minor role in advancing a position in a public debate. Everyone would adopt their responsibilities to participate in public life and contribute to keeping it democratic. Communication lines between the public and officials would stay open and operate in both directions. Politicians would campaign for office presenting their programs and persuading the public of their soundness, necessity,

and effectiveness, and once in office, they would be accountable to the people. The public sphere would be bubbling with diverse voices and opinions, individual as well as representing various social groups (ethnic minorities, women, persons with disabilities, veterans, pensioners, youth, etc). Public fora would proliferate and flourish in the media as well as in a face-to-face mode. Ordinary people participating in them would foster democracy on a daily basis. Such, of course, is the ideal.

Its opposite – the image of eternal Russia that knows no change – would look like a replica of the Soviet public sphere survived in the present day. In that world, very little information about the actions and decisions of authorities would be made public. Policy decisions would be left totally in official hands. The public would be expected to approve the official line, support the official interpretation of past and upcoming events, and express loyalty to the regime. The founding mythology would go unchallenged and the tradition reinforced by the persistent use of ideological symbols and of mandatory participation in public rituals. With their loyalty confirmed, citizens' participation in politics would exhaust itself. No innovations in their role or in the loyalty rituals would be accepted. Patterns of proper behavior, proper thinking, and speaking would be taught universally. Because a choice of the best policy would be in the hands of those at the top, to prove their worth, they would claim expertise in all political matters. Top-down communication, not a dialogue, would constitute the only way of conversing with the public. Open-ended discussions would be discouraged and whenever officials would address the public, it would be for the purpose of announcing policies, not entering into an argument about their soundness. Certainty and stability would be emphasized and

much praised. The line between the powerful and the rest of the nation would further be reinforced by a special political language that one would have to master to be able to talk politics.

In between these two extreme lies a range of possible configurations of political discourse. First is discursive support of a *weak democracy* with political institutions that have been introduced but not firmly rooted and which therefore are not coordinated with one another. In these conditions, one can expect political discourse to be a mix of new and old forms and practices. It could be open to dialogue and could encourage the expression of lay opinion. However, the expression of opinion might not sustain a rational debate, and a public discussion of policies might not result in a decision informed by those opinions. Because learning to argue takes time, in a weak democracy pluralism and openness might appear before the norms of negotiation and compromise are adopted. In a weak democracy, one can also expect that the public accepts its role of democratic citizens and participates in elections but does not exercise its power in other ways. Many forms of public engagement such as informal groups, political parties, and public fora may be present without a clear vision of how their interconnectedness sustains public life. The hierarchy of political actors being destroyed, the new order of mutual responsibility might still be wanting, and practices inherited from the old regime might continue as convenient fall-back options in daily operations that help reduce the growing uncertainty of the outcomes of any public endeavor.

In a democracy that has been *halted*, the political identities of democratic citizens are likely to have stronger manifestations. As the label suggests, democracy is halted not

because the masses do not appreciate freedoms and rights or because they long for the old times of total control and regulation of every aspect of their life. On the contrary, a halted democracy is likely to be such because the masses are aware of their power and because that power threatens the current political class. Overall, a halted democracy is a case of using less democracy as a remedy for its weaknesses. Elites do not totally abandon the democratic project and they have not disregarded democratic rules, but they postpone the task of strengthening the existing democratic institutions and developing the ones that are missing until they can figure out how to make them work “properly.” If Russia is indeed a halted democracy, one could expect to hear discussions of political matters in public fora with occasional concerns about their impact on public policy. But because democracy has taken off, the public conversation is now carried out in multiple “languages.” Public conversation is likely to mix the opinion of the uncouth and ineloquent with those who claim expertise. A cacophony of voices and opinions as well as multiple arenas in which the public expresses its concerns and challenges those in power is discomfiting for those who remember an orderly conversation of other political times with a single center of power clearly marked. Ordinary people might exhibit a stronger commitment to democratic principles and be ready to handle more complex policy decisions than elites are willing to admit. As a consequence, elites would not attempt to mobilize the public. They may even abstain from communicating their plans in hopes that, true to their role as democratic citizens, the masses will support them or at least agree to wait for the policy effects to materialize.

A fake democracy could be expected to feature public conversation in many formats: public debates, public speeches, campaigns, polls, diverse media, and the like – but serving a different purpose. In a genuine democracy, public conversation informs policy decisions. In a fake democracy, it is conducted to manage public emotions, to create a veneer of democratic practices what would conceal self-interests pursued by elites. In a democracy that is imitated, not lived, elections are staged, and the public has little political power beyond reactive voting if they are dissatisfied with the government. To keep people outside politics, elites might present political matters as complicated and requiring special expertise so that ordinary people, who allegedly lack expertise and special training, do not challenge the elites’ judgments. Alternatively, they might not go to the trouble of creating an aura of sophistication around politics. On the other hand, they might be quite frank about how easy it is for them to sway public opinion. In either case, the result is the same: a wedge is driven between the rulers and the ruled. Since semblance and substance are indistinguishable in the outcome, arguments do not carry much weight. Whatever sways the vote is acceptable. For that reason, public opinion is closely watched, carefully managed, and authoritatively referred to.

Finally, the least optimistic scenario is that of *a cancelled democracy* and a return to an authoritarian rule, which might take some enlightened form that would set it apart from the despotic nature of its previous enactment in Russia. Under a new authoritarianism, the cleavage between the rulers and the ruled reappears as the only wise way to save the system from disintegration. A strong leader whose power, capabilities, and competence go unquestioned is likely to emerge. The official line may be doubted

but not challenged openly. Feedback from the public is sought only in the form of approval (or disapproval) of governmental performance, not in the form of suggestions for the improvement. In a climate of non-competitiveness, alternative interpretations of events turn to mere exercises in hypothetical thinking. Political participation, however, may continue to be high or even increase as the propaganda machine mobilizing public support for the regime starts working, although unlike repressions and thought control of old times, new authoritarianism may not fight “foreign ideas” but consider them irrelevant. To boost the official version of the political world, binaries such as us vs. them and right vs. wrong replace the variety of categories, pluralism of opinion, and diversity of experience. With authoritarianism on the rise, public conversation can be expected to become more regimented. With time, it is likely to lose certain voices and topics but gain in predictability.

Now that I outlined four possible scenarios of discursive development in Russia, I will turn to my data to evaluate transformations that the conversation between Russian elites and masses has gone through on the pages of three national publications. Chapter 4 will present my findings about the lay conversation in letters to the editor. Chapter 5 will report on the elites’ voices in editorials. And Chapter 6 will juxtapose the two.

CHAPTER FOUR

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

At the center of democratic politics is a public discussion in which participants compete to have their ideas accepted by others (Schudson, 1997). Democracy, therefore, is seriously impoverished if citizens “withhold their voices from the formal political arena” (Huspek & Kendall, 1991, p.1). Fewer voices in public communication mean a smaller range of debatable topics and a reduced quality of discussion. Without a true diversity of contributing parties, policy decisions lose their firm grounding, certain interests may go unrepresented, and not all political leaders have an equal chance to emerge. But a citizen’s political voice means more than a structural check on representation, observed Huspek & Kendal. It is indispensable for democratic order per se since “only in and through the expression and contestation of values, norms, interests, and policies are democratic citizens able to constitute themselves as free and willful actors who exercise control over the condition of their existence.” By this token, attention to voices in the public sphere reveals a lot about the well-being of a democratic polity.

Historically, newspapers have been central to democratic conversation (Schudson, 1997, p.305), with letters to the editor’s pages offering space where members of the public can bring their concerns for “critical scrutiny of fellow citizens” (Richardson & Franklinm 2004, p.72). Creating a public forum “essential to the effective operation of the democratic system” (Hynds, 1991, p.124), letters to the editor promote reader participation in public life and assist in shaping public opinion (Jackson, 1971, p.152). As

long as the media encourage a forum to convene, they act as “the media by and of the people, rather than merely for the people” (Wahl-Jorgensen, 1999, p.28).

However, the metaphor of the public forum adequately describes letters’ functions only if the democratic citizenry complies to its ideal, that is, if it wants to express opinion, to engage in debates, to pursue public good, and to pay attention to community life. Russians rarely miss this opportunity. In reality, the public that speaks on the letters’ page uses it not only to debate arguments, but also to air grievances and tell personal stories. The local newspapers accommodate such letters particularly well, often turning their pages into a ‘public bulletin board’ (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2001, p.318).

Letter-writing is not a democratic activity per se and is practiced under many political regimes, democratic as well as despotic. Depending on the power relationship between the press and the political system, letters to the editor serve a variety of functions, which makes them an invaluable resource for understanding how various political systems manage their publics (Fitzpatrick, 1996a; Fuerst, 2006; Pounds, 2006). The British press, for instance, is generally seen as “subjected to pressures from below” because it serves people who are famous for “bombard[ing] their newspapers when they feel something is amiss in their community” (Pounds, 2006, p.36). In the Italian tradition, readers write to express both their political protests and their personal feelings, and letters containing confessions and admissions of guilt occasionally appear on the front page (Pounds, 2006). Italian editors, in their turn, see the letters’ section as a marketing device to establish a relationship with readers rather than to provide space for a readers’ forum. Research on letters to the editor in Zimbabwe demonstrated their capacity to constitute an

alternative discourse that runs counter to the officially sanctioned one (Morrison & Love, 1996).

Russians have also been avid readers and writers. Recently opened Soviet archives revealed mountains of letters written by people in all walks of life to Soviet leaders, authorities, and newspapers at all levels. In July 1956, for instance, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, an outlet of the Young Communist League targeting Soviet youth, received more than 8,000 letters a month, only a small fraction of which dealt directly with the newspaper's own publications (Fuerst, 2006). Correspondence came in many shapes: complaints, denunciations, petitions, confessions, threats, and others.

Reports Fitzpatrick (1996b):

Patriotic citizens wrote letters of advice on public policy and signed their names. Angry citizens sent letters of abuse and invective anonymously. Abandoned wives, widows and orphans wrote plaintive pleas for help; lonely people poured out their hearts and asked for understanding. Prisoners and their relatives appealed for amnesty; disenfranchised persons petitioned for reinstatement of civil rights and passport; recent migrants from villages asked for urban residence permits; poor people asked for all kinds of 'material help,' including shelter, old clothes and money; parents sought to have their children admitted to universities and sometimes orphanages. People wrote letters to the authorities for many different purposes: to get housing, to get justice, to get a job, to collect child support, to defend an arrested relative, to find a missing one, to hurt a neighbor, to get rid of their boss, to warn about plots and conspiracies, to complain about high prices.

Letters were written to solve problems, resolve disputes and settle scores. People wrote in a spirit of duty, malice, ambition, loneliness, despair (p.80-81).

As the works cited above show and as civic textbooks remind us, writing to authorities helps raise good citizens but it does not necessarily produce democratic citizens. Each regime encourages political subjects that fit the already existing power configuration. Thus, Soviet letter-writing produced good Soviet citizens but did not democratize the system despite a surface similarity with Western genres of popular communication. What was different about Soviet letter-writing then? The most immediate disparity is the secrecy of the correspondence: many letters were not meant for public eyes, especially the correspondence that Fitzpatrick called ‘signals from below:’ letters that reported the wrongs (actual or alleged) hoping that proper authorities would be notified and the transgressor punished.

With the advent of perestroika, letter-writing saw a true transformation when *Ogonyok*, the Soviet popular weekly, created a first national forum for an *open* public discussion and unleashed an “unprecedented outpouring of opinion and passion” from people across the country (Cerf & Albee, 1990). Issues brought to public attention reached from leaky roofs to Stalin and Lenin, capitalism and socialism, and every subject in between (ibid). *Ogonyok*’s editor-in-chief, Vitaly Korotich, who led it through the extraordinary popularity of the perestroika years, explained the attraction of the letters’ section in the following way:

Only in a country where the government is ineffective can the editors of a weekly magazine receive so many letters. People are turning to us because they want to

change their lives, and they see us journalists, whom they trust, as their main ally in that battle. When people became disillusioned with the previous corrupt leadership they discovered freedom in discussing the actions of those who had brought this tragedy upon the country, and they used that freedom to the fullest. Their letters became fearless, and our correspondents were so accurate and courageous in presenting their views that one could only rejoice at such widespread sophisticated political thinking (Korotich, cited in Cerf & Albee 1990, p.13)

In the late 1980s - early 1990s, people indeed turned to the press as a place where the truth was being told, but Korotich's explanation weaves its own myth, presenting the newspapers as having political muscle powerful enough to straighten up authorities and right wrongs. Such a vision casts a positive light on reporters, but it also romanticizes an ordinary letter-writer. Given the history of denunciatory letters in Russia, a story of a powerless public and its only ally, the press, sounds too good to be true. Korotich, however, makes an important observation: letters in Russian newspapers may be a temporary phenomenon, energized by distortions in public life and bound to discontinue as soon as the country returns to normal. "When people begin to believe the leadership again," he says, "they will turn to it more often, and they will discuss and insist on changes for the better. But for the time being they write and complain to us [...]"(cited in Cerf & Albee 1990, p.13)

Having lived through times of political transformation, Russians have not stopped writing letters and the papers have not stopped carrying them. Letters regularly appear in

the press, but what purposes do they serve now? Russians enjoy expressing their opinions. They are argumentative and confront people and ideas, but are they more democratic because of that? When exploring the potential of the letters' section as a democratic forum in this chapter, I elaborate on that metaphor and map out elements of the forum. Specifically, I ask (1) Who are the participants in the forum? (2) What are they doing in the forum? (3) What discursive practices have they developed/abandoned over time? (4) What kind of political context do these changes reflect? and finally, (5) Are those changes supportive or obstructive of democratic reforms? In what follows, I present my findings about the shape of the public forum in the Russian press, highlighting new practices adopted by the public as well as those that stubbornly resist change.

PARTICIPANTS TO THE FORUM

Who talks in the public forum in Russia? Are they happy and do they share their joy or are they sad, writing out of despair? Do they engage in debate or exhaust themselves in a single outcry? What do letter-writers hope to accomplish through their correspondence? These are important questions for gaining a deeper and a more nuanced understanding of political and social transformation in Russia. Unlike public opinion surveys that track spreading and clustering of beliefs and attitudes in different demographic segments, I do not probe into *who* writes those letters. Some of the writers, no doubt, are signed off with false names, provide non-existing home-addresses, and mix too much gloom into the palette. Because they exist, these features are to be understood as rhetorical strategies selected by letter-writers to accomplish certain goals. They are

part of my puzzle, not a contaminating influence. “Keep[ing] an ear closer to the ground” and listening for the discursive rhythms of Russian letter-writers, I assume that their writing is a performance, not biographical data, and that my job is to explain the roles adopted when writers put their pens to paper with the intention of making their messages public. Their masks of victims or victors, self-standing or dependant, needy or well-off, experts or ignoramuses are all worn from time to time, suggestive of a full repertoire of social and political roles in Russian public life. Understanding the demographic cross-section would certainly add another deep and fascinating dimension to this project, revealing the distribution of roles among different groups but it falls outside the scope of my current research. Here, I am asking not who Russian letter-writers are but how they want to be seen and what advantage they hope to gain from casting themselves in certain roles.

My reading of the letters reveals that Russians, enthusiastically offering their comments on public matters, *(1) employ a small repertoire of political voices, (2) address primarily their fellow-citizens, and (3) engage their audience in argumentative ways.* Each of these observations is detailed below, drawing attention to similarities and differences between Russian letter-writers across time.

To begin with, the repertoire of letter-writers’ voices is constrained by the very nature of a public letter. Selection and editing of letters largely rests with editors. To stand out from hundreds of letters arriving in the daily mail to various editorial offices, readers adopt strategies that they believe will ensure that their letters are noticed (Lambiase, 2005). That is, I find that *Russian letter-writers choose from a repertoire of*

four voices. Some of them speak on behalf of a group and advocate for group concerns. In this capacity, they pose as small-town residents, farmers, pensioners, or the unemployed. Others freely use partisan language and speak favorably of group sentiments but do not directly promote the group's causes nor claim group membership. Such writers are labeled here as 'sympathizers'. Yet other writers express their views as non-affiliated individuals, making their own voice heard. And, finally, some letter-writers avoid any personal identification and speak in an 'objectified,' impersonal, encyclopedic voice. The four excerpts below illustrate each of these voices:

Individuals

В "НГ" от 13.05.96 была опубликована заметка Владимира Осипова "Закон Божий" в школе: кто против?" Я против. Я, мать двоих детей, - против. (Nezavisimaaia Gazeta, 1996, June 20)

[NG' on 13.05.96 published a short report by Vladimir Osipov "Lord's Law in school: who is against [it]?" I am. I, a mother of two children, am against [it].]

Sympathizer

Для меня загадкой является другое: почему у нас есть, например, врачи, которые за копейки занимаются тем, чем они занимаются? Смирлись с тем, что они второй сорт? (Ogoniok, 2008, February 25)

[To me, a puzzle is this: why we have, for example, doctors who do what they do for pennies? [Have they become] content with being of a second sort?]

Representatives

Пишу по поводу этого заголовка от имени упомянутой вами корейской диаспоры в России. Этим заголовком вы выдали очередную порцию нелюбви к русским. (Ogoniok, 1996, June 24)

[I am] responding to this title on behalf of the Korean Diaspora in Russia mentioned by you. With this title you triggered another dose of hatred towards Russians.]

Anonymous

Читательница Наталья Полулях права: знание некоторых положений православной религии и обрядов - еще не зомбирование ("Зомбирование теоремой Пифагора", 20.02.2004). "Что представляют собой суточный и годовой круги богослужений" и т. д. - это факты, такие же, как закон Ома или содержание "Войны и мира". Но!!!

Во-первых, возможности человека к постижению знаний небеспретельны. Приходится отбирать - чему учить школьников, а что и сами изучат, если заинтересуются. Во-вторых, читательница, будучи верующим православным человеком, представляет одну из субкультур огромной российско-советской культуры. И невольно преувеличивает значение своей субкультуры. Так же, как это делают, скажем, сельские жители, военные, спортсмены или русскоязычные евреи.(Izvestiia, 2004, February 25)

[Reader Natalia Poluliakh is right: knowledge of some propositions of the Orthodox religion and rituals is not a zombie-nation ("Brainwashing by Pythagorean theorem," 20.02.2004). What the daily and annual circle of the mass, etc are, are facts, similar to the Ohm law or the content of War and Peace. But!!!

First, human capacity for acquiring knowledge is not limitless. [one] has to choose – what to teach schoolchildren, and what they can learn on their own if interested. Second, the reader, being a faithful Orthodox person, represents one of the sub-cultures of the large Russian-Soviet culture. And [she] unwillingly exaggerates the significance of her subculture. In a similar way, as it is done by provincial doctors, military, athletes or Russian-speaking Jews.]

The four voices do not compete among themselves in all discussions. Instead, each of them carries authority for a given set of topics. An individual voice champions discussions related to various spheres of life (education, health, defense issues) as well as social 'glue' (inter-ethnic relations, social justice, treatment of history, and, of course, values, mores, and social norms). Group representatives and sympathizers tend to be

more vocal in conversations with authorities but their comments de-emphasize the realm of politics. In fact, regardless of the stance adopted by the letter-writer, politics remains the least likely topic to address. The distribution of four voices across time offers insight into their popularity and relative benefits that they bring to writers. Overall, adopting the voice of a self-standing individual has been the most popular choice, although it has recently lost some ground. In 1996, 45.95% of the letters adopted that stance. In 2008, only 33.33% of the writers positioned themselves as independent individuals. As novel as it once was to make oneself heard and to shout out one’s criticisms and opinions, it appears that single outcries in public may no longer be enough to accomplish the writers’ goals.

Table 4.1

Writer’s Voice across Time

		Representative	Sympathizer	Self	Abstract
1996	n=74	19	11	34	10
	%	25.68	14.86	45.95	13.51
2000	n=89	18	10	38	23
	%	20.22	11.24	42.70	25.84
2004	n=68	11	4	33	20
	%	16.18	5.88	48.53	29.41
2008	n=63	14	12	21	16
	%	22.22	19.05	33.33	25.40

On the other hand, after being in decline for two electoral cycles, ‘group’ voices also got louder, especially the voices of sympathizers, a strategy that has tripled in volume. Unlike these options, the abstract, impersonal voice does not show signs of

either weakening or of amplifying. Securing a firm position in about a quarter of the letters around the year 2000, it has held that position ever since.

This chorus of voices is remarkable for several reasons. First, the large number of letters in which individuals “stick their neck out” to address a diverse public audience runs counter to the view of Russians as an apathetic people. In 2004, close to half of all letters in my sample used the individual voice, demonstrating that speaking one’s mind has become more popular and that the stereotypes of Russians having a collectivist mentality and a slavish soul, blind to public participation, inevitably misinterpret Russian behavioral patterns. Second, a solo-performance, although still very popular, faces strong competition . Voices that rely on the support of a group or that borrow the credibility of a group have recently proven to be more successful in gaining the forum’s attention. However, absent from my data are partisan letters written on behalf of interest groups as part of public relations campaigns. The practice of astroturfing that has plagued letters’ pages in Britain, the U.S., and Australia is still unknown in Russia, thus making letters to the editor a discursive terrain somewhat harbored from the Western rhetorical battlefields of public opinion.

A growing familiarity of the Russian public with the rules of an open, competitive forum might explain some of the discursive choices. As Russians are getting accustomed to speaking up in public rather than sending anonymous complaints to authorities, the old strategies of pouring out grievances do not bring the results they once did. In the forum, the personalized stories level off to share space with arguments and expert opinions.

An alternative explanation of a diminishing individual stance might be connected to the closing of a public sphere and the growing censorship of the Russian press (Zbenovich, 2007), some of which might be taking the shape of self-censorship. Based on my evidence presented so far, this conclusion appears ungrounded. After all, the abstract voice stripped of individual features has not grown tremendously in the years where censorship allegedly started. Instead, it has shown a steady presence throughout the years I have examined. In addition, it is a difference in voices, not the absence of a voice, that Russian letter-writers have best demonstrated. The public forum may have been transformed in the past couple of years but it has not closed down. What the transformation has brought with it, what possibilities it has opened and what it has dismissed, is my primary concern in the remainder of this chapter.

Being a genre that blends public and private impulses, that addresses concrete people but is overheard by numerous others, letters are uniquely positioned to manipulate the tension between their many audiences. The public letter, noted Palczewski (1996), “functions as a formal oxymoron; it is a private document that is read publicly” (p.4). Who do Russian letter-writers imagine to be the audience attending to their grievances, praises, corrections, and comments? Nominally, of course, all letters are sent to the editor or, in the Russian tradition, to the editorial office. Therefore, nominally, all have the editor as a default addressee. Yet, as the metaphor of a forum encourages one to assume, other listeners are present within the public space, broadening the audience to include potentially anyone who happens to read the paper. So, unlike what the name of the genre suggests, letter-writers talk to a rather diverse audience: the general public, the editors,

reporters, other readers of the same newspaper, other letter-writers, and public officials (see Table 4.2). Nevertheless, *Russian letter-writers primarily address their fellow-citizens.*

In their capacity as the most popular addressees of Russian letter-writers, fellow-citizens surpassed newspapers (editors and journalists) as early as 1996 and have remained the primary audience for discussions of such matters as public policies, calls to justice, and reports of power abuses. The press comes second in order of popularity.

Table 4.2

Audience Composition across Time (%)

	Officials	Newspaper	Fellow Citizens		Mixed
			Readers	General	
1996	5.41	50.00	12.16	27.03	5.41
2000	2.25	32.58	8.89	53.93	2.25
2004	0.00	23.53	26.47	41.18	8.83
2008	4.76	41.27	6.35	44.44	3.17
TOTAL	3.06	36.73	13.27	42.18	4.76

With reciprocity built into their form, letters to the editor demand a response and continuation of the relationship, although a public letter does not expect that further exchanges will become a public series as well. In other words, a published letter leverages its power by making its existence public. It does not insist on making the response public or pretend to have never received the message in the first place. But the response cannot be denied. The addressee cannot totally ignore the letter since its

publication makes him/her accountable not only to the letter-writer but to the on-looking public as well. The exchange, however, maintains a single communication line. The evoked audience is rarely invited to the talk. Its role is to witness the exchange.

Persistent appeals to public officials provide a good illustration of a skillful exploitation of letters' generic conventions and raise two intriguing questions: why do people continue addressing authorities via newspapers and do why newspapers agree to run these letters? A message to the president, for instance, could be mailed (or e-mailed) directly to the Kremlin where it would have a better chance of reaching the addressee. It is hard to imagine that citizens believe that the president is reading all newspapers in the nation and paying particular attention to readers' correspondence. But a reader would never have dropped a letter in the mail had s/he not believed that it produces an effect impossible to create otherwise. One letter to the president, for example, starts as an individual appeal to the addressee, emphasizing the distance between him and the writer and pointing at the initial difficulty in communication: *“Уважаемый господин Путин! Я обращаюсь к Вам, не имея никакой надежды на то, что мое слово будет услышано: очень трудно докричаться с низов до представителей политической власти, даже если это происходит в предвыборную кампанию.”* [Dear Mr. Putin! I am addressing you having no hope that my word will be heard: it is very difficult to reach the representatives of the political power from the bottom even if during the electoral campaign]. The letter ends with a statement on behalf of the group into which potentially all Russians citizens are included: *“И все же... мы хотим быть услышанными.”* [And still... we want to be heard].

Addressing a remote and largely imagined audience presents letter-writers with two options: either to compensate for those communicative inconveniences by using language that deliberately seeks to engage invisible listeners or to indulge in an opportunity to express their own opinions uninterrupted. Either option is fully open. *Russian letter writers seem to take extra care to enter into a dialogue with their audience*: they ask questions, use invocations, quotes, direct appeals, imagine possible rejoinders and respond to them. Even though in some cases the debate itself may be orchestrated by the mere placement of letters side by side on a page, interaction is ingrained in the text. An exchange between two *Ogonyok*'s readers regarding space exploration exemplified these patterns.

Text 1

Статья «Периодическая таблица марсианских элементов» вызвала у меня массу вопросов. Не мог бы кто-нибудь хоть раз толково объяснить, зачем нам все это надо? Ну найдут или уже нашли на Марсе следы воды, допустим. Ну построят очередную теорию (может быть, когда-то кто-то там существовал). Ну и что? Скажите мне, какова практическая ценность всего этого? И какова цена подобных изысканий?

Теперь вот считают, что дорогуемых автоматических станций мало, надо бы людей заслать, что вызовет гигантские энергетические и прочие затраты. Я еще могу понять Америку с ее непомерными капиталами и тщеславием, но мы-то куда лезем? Ну зачем нам бежать впереди паровоза, то бишь прогресса? В стране некуда потратить деньги? Оглянитесь вокруг!

Буду очень признателен, если получу вразумительные объяснения.
(*Ogonyok*, 2004, March 15)

[Article “The periodical table of Martian elements” raised loads of questions with me. Could someone explain, at least once, why we need all that? OK, they will find or have already found traces of water on Mars, for instance. OK, they will build a next theory (maybe some time somebody existed there). So what? Let me ask, what is the practical value of all that? And, what is the price of such exploration?

Now they are thinking that the super-expensive automatic space-stations are not enough, we need to send people out there, which would lead to gigantic costs of energy, etc. I can understand America with its enormous capital and arrogance, but why are we measuring up? Why should be run ahead of the engine, that is, the progress? We have nothing to spend money on? Look around!
I will appreciate reasonable explanations.]

Text2

Меня удивил вопрос вашего читателя, опытного инженера: кому он нужен, этот Марс, нам что, некуда тратить деньги? Ну тогда и я спрошу: что, так и будем жить хлебом единым?

Человечество давно терзается вопросом: откуда мы и зачем, произошли от обезьяны или отпочковались от какой-нибудь космической ветви. Ответа до сих пор нет. И мы часто думаем, что мы не здешние, доказательством чему есть наше хищническое отношение к этой планете. Так что это громадный мировоззренческий вопрос.

К тому же из этой свалки, в которую мы превращаем родную планету, когда-нибудь придется переселяться. Марс -- наше будущее, и черт с ними, «гигантскими энергетическими и прочими затратами». Пора продвигать науку. Первые попытки его освоения обогатят бесценным опытом и новыми технологиями. Не так уж давно люди впервые отправлялись к берегам далеких земель. Да, был риск, но технологии совершенствовались, и сегодня это стало будничным делом. Также и с покорением космоса.

И если инженер со стажем этого не понимает, то стоять ему на рынке и продавать бижутерию... (Огонюк, 2004, March 29)

[I was very surprised by the question from your reader, an experienced engineer: who needs that Mars; don't we have nothing to spend money on? Well, I will ask, then, too: so, are we going to continue living by bread alone?

Humanity has long been struggling with the question where we come from and for what purpose, descended from apes or branched off some space lineage. The answer has not been found yet. And we often think that we are not from here, a proof of which is our predatory attitude to this planet. So, this is a huge philosophical question.

Additionally, out of this dump into which we are turning our home planet [we] will need someday to move. Mars is our future and to hell with those "gigantic energy and other costs." It's time to advance science. The first attempt of its exploration will enrich [us] with invaluable experience and new technologies. After all, not that long ago people sailed off to the remote shores for

the first time. Yes, there was a risk, but technologies improved, and today it is a routine matter. The same [will be] with the space exploration.

And if an engineer with a long career does not understand this, his place is with the knick-knack stall at the street market.]

The first letter focuses on the practical concerns of extensive space programs given the abysmal economic situation in the country. Laying out his considerations about spending priorities, the author challenges his audience with a response. The second letter provides a response but not as an alternative to consider. Instead, it dismisses the argument put forward by the first author, attacking his expertise for failing to see the issue in a global perspective. The second author adopts the voice of humanity's advocate through which he reproaches the narrow perspective and immediate material concerns of the first author. If the space exploration program can ignite such a barbed exchange between newspapers' readers, what other issues have a similar ability to attract public attention? The next section will discuss issues raised in the letters.

THE FORUM'S AGENDA

Not every topic imaginable appears in letters' sections. Some topics that reflect issues of the day quickly become obsolete, others stay longer; still others never surface in public conversation. In letters sent to Russian newspapers, economic issues are always present on the agenda (13.27%). They are complained about, discussed, and usually found to be the cause of all misfortunes. Another pet peeve of the Russian public is the media (poor coverage, excessive advertising on TV, excessive entertainment, negativity in news), taking up 11.47 % of the discussion. Apart from these two popular topics, a thematic analysis of the letters during the twelve years examined reveals a notable

transformation: content-wise, *the letters are gradually sliding toward trivial matters*. This trivialization occurs along three dimensions: (1) topics concerning personal matters are increasing their presence at the expense of the political ones; (2) the language used in the letters places people and politics into conceptually diametrical positions; (3) letter-writers have recently revived their old practice of expressing pleas and grievances.

In 1996, letters-writers discussed 23 topics. In 2008, they discussed only 18. Out of three thematic groups: politics (elections, political activism, authorities and officials); spheres of life (economy, health, education, media, religion, defense, etc) and social climate (mores and norms, justice, national history), politics has been mostly affected (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3

Issues in Letters to the Editor across Time (%)

	Politics	Life Spheres	Social Climate
1996	21.43	64.29	14.29
2000	24.59	45.90	29.51
2004	31.73	50.00	18.27
2008	12.50	47.73	39.77

Letters raising concerns regarding private life now have their secured place in print. In fact, discussions about divorce, single-parenting, excessive weight, and sleeping disorders are gaining more and more room. Social relations attract a very uneven attention among the letter-writers. Most topics that were discontinued or pushed to the periphery of the forum belong to the political realm, a diminution that is somewhat

disturbing. Until the year 2008, political comments steadily grew in volume. Then, they suddenly lost almost two thirds of their popularity. Gone from *all* newspapers in 2008 are such topics as institutional politics, laws and regulations, rights and freedoms, political activism (both as political opposition to the government and as a matter of popular mobilization), reports of power abuses, and mentions of corruption.

Such thinning out of political talk and the expansion of conversation about personal matters signal “environmental” difficulties for a public forum embracing a democratic mission. The tendency to focus on personal experience and provide ‘egocentric’ arguments is not unique to the Russian population, though. Scholars studying citizen’s talk in discussion groups in the U.S. reported that it “gravitates towards the more expressive end of [the] continuum” and that public policy discussions are more likely to be conducted “in terms of self-interest and self-experience” than to advocate policies for the benefits of others (Levasseur & Carlin, 2001, p.419). Therefore, cultural preferences are an unlikely explanation of the rapid drop in the range of politically discussable topics. Russians still write about injustice and corruption. They have not stopped noticing violations of laws and rules. They still take matters of institutional politics close to heart. Yet their political stories increasingly tend to be more abstract and analytical, aiming at a ‘systemic’ account of the situation (*Беда в том, что отсутствует пропаганда* [Our tragedy is in the absence of propaganda]; *Милиция бездействует!* [Militia is inactive!] ... *беда банальна: незанятость!* [the tragedy is banal – unemployment!]). This overarching view of events leaves the reader (and the

writer) more informed about existing problems but does not empower them to solve them. Compare two letters written in 1996 and 2008:

*Читаешь о судьбе Ю.А. Брюханова (№ 25) -- клянешь старую власть.
Читаешь о коррупции, росте преступности или о том же Байконуре -- видишь бессилие власти новой. Что же это за власть такая, которая ни в какие времена не может обеспечить достойную жизнь? И вечно около нее процветают прилипалы -- и при Хрущеве, и при Брежнев, и при Ельцине. Возьмите хотя бы те же генеральские дворцы, о которых сейчас кричат все СМИ, -- извечный российский вопрос. Только не говорите, что президент ничего не знал. А если не знал -- ему минус. (Ogoniok, 1996, July 23)*

[One reads about Yu.A. Brukhanov (No.25) – and curse the old authorities. One reads about corruption, the crime rates or about Baikonur for that matter - and see the powerlessness of the new authorities. What kind of authorities are they if they can never provide decent conditions of life? And they are always breeding sycophants – under Khrushchev, and under Brezhnev, and under Yeltsin. Take, for instance, the army generals’ palaces which the media are now shouting about – this is an eternal Russian issue. Only don’t tell me that the president knew nothing. If he didn’t, that’s not to his advantage.]

В одной из своих недавних статей Д.Губин писал, что он с друзьями тоже ходил «на баррикады» против путчистов потому, что хотелось, чтобы у всех были джинсы. Не знаю, оговорился ли он, но, думаю, попал в точку. Действительно, советская система рухнула не потому, что народ осознал ее моральное уродство и преступность, а потому, что она не обеспечивала джинсами (колбасой, маслом, обувью и т.п.). Глядя за бугор, народ считал, что демократия и есть средство получить эти самые возжеленные джинсы. Но как только оказалось, что высокая цена на нефть в сочетании с сильной рукой (то есть диктатурой) может принести и хлеб, и джинсы (хотя и далеко не всем), как сразу демократия оказалась народу не нужной и даже вредной. (Ogoniok, 2008, March 24)

[In one of his recent articles D. Gubin wrote that he and his friends also went to the ‘barricades’ against the Putsch because wanted that everyone had a pair of jeans. I am not sure if he misspoke but I think he hit the point. Indeed, the Soviet system collapsed not because the people realized its moral deformity and criminal nature but because it did not provide jeans (sausage, butter, shoes, etc). Looking at the ‘abroad,’ the people thought that democracy is in fact a means to get those so much desired jeans. But as soon as high oil prices combined with an iron fist

(that is, dictatorship) can bring both bread and jeans (although, by far, not to everybody), the people found democracy unwanted and even harmful.]

These two excerpts have a lot in common. Both negatively comment on the government; both represent an argument; both raise the discussion to a “systemic” level. Nevertheless, the two texts are markedly different. The earlier letter names ‘the enemy’ while the more recent one abstains from attributing personal responsibility and blames people in general for having improper ideas about democracy. The former mentions some facts while the latter puts forward an opinion that is not supported by any data other than “it-is-obvious-that” claims. Finally, the first author reveals personal information but the second one hides behind general statements.

Similarly to Levasseur & Carlin’s (2001) participants, Russian letters carry a fair amount of egocentrism. But their egocentrism does not apply to political matters. Russian letter-writers simply do not translate national politics to the personal level but instead present themselves as motivated by the common good. Individual political claims, be it personal benefits or losses from implemented or projected public policies, are undermined because institutional politics is positioned remotely. Not having a firm grasp of the relevant political issues or an ability to defend their own political interests, Russian letter-writers are challenged to either drop political topics or gloss over the realm of politics with vague generalizations.

Moreover, no voice at the moment seems to be secure enough to talk politics. Self-confident individuals tend to be fairly outspoken politically (see Table 4.4) but they have become rarer. One finds a surprisingly low frequency of political topics in letters

adopting a collective stance (a group representative or a sympathizer), an indication that the political advantages of collective bodies are not immediately apparent to ordinary people. In fact, collective voices are most often found in discussions that do not have links to institutional politics (at least on a superficial level).

Table 4.4

Writers' Voices by Topic Distribution (%)

	Representative (n=62)	Sympathizer (n=37)	Self (n=126)	Abstract (n=69)
Life Spheres	50.00	51.35	42.06	38.81
Politics	11.29	8.11	15.08	13.43
Social Climate	12.9	10.81	23.81	23.88
Mixed	25.81	29.73	19.05	23.88

What explains these preferences in topics and voices? Why do individual and abstract voices turn out to be most useful? Are those who write to newspapers simply moralizers that climb onto the stage whenever they have a chance? Why is it that Russians do not come across as more group-centered given common expectations derived from the conventional placement of Russia among collectivist cultures? What advantages are there in standing alone when talking politics? So far, my observations of the forum only partially confirm previous findings and reports. For instance, the attitudes to politics and the political world found in my data are in tune with those observed by Olga Shevchenko (2001) who noticed in her interviewees “an almost demonstrative and passionately conveyed alienation from the sphere of big politics” (p.82), which they perceived as “incomprehensible and, ultimately, alien” (p.83).

Unfortunately, feelings of alienation from institutionalized politics are not new nor are they brought to life by social and political change in recent years. They were, instead, widespread even before perestroika (Shlapentokh, 1986). But beliefs in the corruption of politicians widened the already existing gap between ordinary people and officials, compelling the former to demonstratively de-politicize. On a brighter note, researchers continue finding that such reticence does not always mean that Russians are a-political. As Shevchenko discovered, “despite the declared indifference and even repulsion to politics, the critical discussion of political themes never failed to be emotional and extensive, and could well measure up to a similarly zealous discussion of the economic troubles and hardships of everyday life” (p. 83). Therefore, it is possible that Russians are trying to dissociate themselves from politicians, authorities, top officials and not from politics per se. When political issues are brought in under a different label, Russians do not refrain from discussing power, governance, democracy, foreign policy, administrative concerns, and other political matters. But do they think of politics as a complex arena beyond their comprehension or do they view it as unworthy of attention and engagement? The language used by ordinary people to discuss issues on the agenda sheds important light on the way public life and politics are conceptualized.

After several years of adjusting to post-Soviet realities, the Russian vernacular absorbed a set of cognitive schemas that *place people and politics into conceptually diametrical positions*. During the early days of Russia’s political transformation and the untangling of Soviet ideological tenets, Russian political discourse reworked a large number of notions, reinterpreting or replacing quite a few of them. The national project

was no longer to develop socialism further but to improve and accelerate the existing system. The new political situation was called *proryv* (breakthrough), *bor'ba* (battle), *eksperiment* (experiment). But the buzzwords of perestroika often conflicted with each other. For instance, one of the key phrases, that of a *dead-end*, entailed only one solution, namely, of moving backward in order to “[return] to the starting point in history, where the wrong turn, so to speak, had been taken” (Kaul, 1998, p.103). But to reject the notion of acceleration and forward movement on which Gorbachev’s domestic policies were founded would have been political suicide. Thus, although it was popular, the metaphor of a dead-end contradicted other elements of Russia’s new political terrain.

When the turbulent times of perestroika were over, new metaphors and new ways of thinking about the political realm emerged, although metaphors of the road remained among the most productive. They linked the country and the traveler, the future and the destination, policies and a means of transportation, the action plan and the route (or the map). But the number of elements and the relations among them changed as different aspects of the trip became more relevant. In 1996, four out of five metaphors in my data put an emphasis on the fruitless efforts of travelers and the wrong route they followed: people were seen as destined to move in circles (*мы обречены на блуждание по кругу*), the current situation was still compared to a dead-end (*Как же выходить из тупика?*), and hopes hinged upon some charitable outsider showing people a way out of (*наконец-то проложит дорогу нам, россиянам*). With time, Russians gained confidence in their leaders and in the direction in which the country was heading:

Так что для меня действия Путина - это однозначно шаг вперед, поскольку соответствует моим личным интересам, интересам моих детей и, как я понимаю, интересам России в целом. (Izvestiia, 2004, March 23)

[Thus, for me, Putin's actions are undoubtedly a step forward because [it is] consistent with my personal interests, interests of my children, and, as I understand, interests of Russia in general.]

The longevity of metaphors of the road is matched only by their pervasiveness. As my discussion below will demonstrate, its elements appear in articulation of many notions of the political world such as elections, democracy, leaders, progress (future), and power.

Power. Metaphors used to discuss power present it as a hierarchical structure, with most power located at a point above the people. Letter-writers talk about the heights of power (*на вершинах власти*), the rigid line of command, echoing here Vladimir Putin's the phrase '*vertical vlasti*' [the vertical of power]. Power is seen as concentrated in the hands of a few who reside at the top ('*слушателям "наверху" невдомек*' [listeners at the top are clueless]), rather than dispersed among the many. Rare metaphors of power sources that present it as fluid do not have as much circulation. Instead, letter-writers predominantly think of power as a solid entity and not likely to flow down from its place at the top, as a heavy object bearing its weight on the subjects who resides underneath it (*находится под сильным давлением властей* [is under the heavy pressure by the authorities]). To complicate matters further, the Russian language easily conflates *власть* (power) and *власти* (authorities), creating conceptually inseparable bundles: authorities who hold power also reside at a distance from the people, usually at a higher point '*наверху не доверяют местной власти*' [at the top [they] don't trust the local

authorities]. Such blends equate having power and being powerful (*А у председателя конечно же была гербовая печать - на то он и власть* [And the chairman has of course the official stamp - that is what he is power for]). Unfortunately, as these examples demonstrate, neither having power nor being powerful is associated with ordinary people.

Politics & politicians. With power separated from the people and with politics conceptually removed from them as well, professionals come to the center stage. An extended metaphor of COUNTRY AS A PLANE used in one letter highlights this role of politicians as experts, persons entrusted by the population with directing the nation:

Все мы в России - пассажиры взлетевшего в 1991 году лайнера. Мы доверили свою жизнь экипажу профессионалов, которых многократно избирали. Пришло время заходить на посадку, выпускать шасси в конце пути уже со сменившейся в 2000 году командой. Пора всем нам - и правым, и левым - пристегнуть ремни безопасности, потушить сигареты и не мотаться без дела по салону в ожидании приземления. (Izvestiia, 2000, April 18)

[All of us in Russia are the passengers of the plane took off in 1991. We entrusted our life to the crew of professionals which we elected many times. Now it's time to land, to open the landing wheels at the end of the flight with the crew that came on board in 2000. It's time for all of us – the left and the right – to fasten the belts, put out cigarettes, and stop running around the cabin with nothing else to do before landing.]

Attribution of special knowledge and skills to politicians creates around them a conceptual 'screen' that effectively blocks lay participation and that disarms popular discontent. At the same time, arguments from political expertise boost politicians' credibility and simultaneously undermine the popular right to have a say. With their

expertise unchallenged, politicians are given full responsibility for the well-being of the country and blamed when things do not go as planned. Here is a textual example:

Хочу задать четыре вопроса нашему правительству. Почему Арабские Эмираты, имея только нефть, купаются в роскоши? Почему в бывших соцстранах Восточной Европы, не имеющих ни нефти, ни газа, зарплата и пенсии в 2-3 раза выше, чем в России? Почему в нашей стране, столь богатой природными ресурсами, так бедно живет народ? И когда мы будем жить не хуже? (Izvestiia, 2008, February 13)

[I] want to ask our government four questions. Why the United Arab Emirate, having only oil, are swimming in luxury? Why are in the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe, [who] have neither oil nor gas, the salaries and pensions tow-three times higher than in Russia? Why is it that in our country, so rich in natural resources, people are so poor? And when will we live better?]

The last question posed by this writer ('when will we live better?') carries an implication of the government keeping the keys to a better life. People, again, are reduced to an obedient mass to whom decisions are handed down.

Democracy. Given the centrality of democracy to the political organization of the contemporary world and the tangled route that, by many accounts, democratic changes have taken in Russia, it is surprising to see a very small set of metaphors used by letter-writers to discuss this notion. Less surprisingly, however, is the reverse manner in which descriptions of democracy and power talk develop: while the language of democracy is diminishing, the language of power is on the rise. On the one hand, this suggests that the centrality of democracy to Russian politics is greatly exaggerated, that expectations of popular democratic support might be ungrounded, that the Russian people and their leaders might harbor the goal not of creating democracy but, say, of building a

functioning state or ensuring a decent life. On the other hand, it is equally possible that, for Russians, the concept of democracy does not need metaphorical innovations because it is well understood and expressed in plain, direct, non-figurative language.

The language used in letters to describe the prospects of democracy does not picture one possibility being as more plausible than the other. Letters written in 1996 and 2000 conceptualized democracy as a live object (“*демократия с вековыми корнями*” [democracy with century-long roots]) or as a living being in need of care and attention (“*Демократию ведь пестовать надо*” [you have to foster democracy]) whose death was prematurely announced (“*демократию нашу, пусть плохую, убогую, перекошенную уже не закопать* [our democracy, however poor, crippled and twisted, cannot be buried now]). Later, democracy started to be presented as an abstract idea. By the year 2008, as it turned out, no letter writer in my sample discussed democracy at all, either as a future prospect or as an accomplishment. One letter in particular, a letter addressed to the then-president Putin, is worth a closer look:

Насколько всем нам известно, Россия еще не определилась в выборе своего глобального политического пути. Мы все утверждаем, что у нас своя история, своя судьба и избранный путь должен соответствовать этому. Никакой окончательной программы, утверждающей курс на демократизацию, у нас нет. Почему же нам должно быть стыдно признать, что мы недемократическая держава? Что выходя из долгого однопартийного и тоталитарного режима, мы не можем в одно мгновение ока превратиться в демократов, потому что даже определение "демократии" недоступно нашему сознанию. К тому же всему мыслящему миру известно, что идеальных политических режимов нет и что демократия, как и другие политические системы, тоже далека от идеала. [...] Какую ставку сделает сегодня Россия? Это Вам решать. (Nezavisimaaia Gazeta, 2008, February 19)

[As we all know, Russia has not finalized the choice of its global political line. We all state that we have our own history, own fate and the chosen way must correspond to that. We don't have any final program determining the course towards democratization. Why should we feel ashamed to admit that we are not a democratic state? That coming out of a long one-party and totalitarian regime, we cannot over night turn into democrats, because even the definition of democracy is inaccessible to our minds. In addition, all thinking humanity knows that there are no ideal political regimes and that democracy, like other political systems, is far from the ideal.[...] Which stakes will Russia make today? It's up to you to decide.]

The author here admits that Russia has no program of democratization (“*программы, утверждающей курс на демократизацию, у нас нет*”). But Russians, he asserts, should not be ashamed of their still undemocratic ways because they have not had enough time to turn into democrats (“*мы не можем в одно мгновение ока превратиться в демократов*”). The problem, however, lies much deeper than speeding up a transition. According to this letter, the very definition of democracy is inconceivable to the Russian mind. Another letter puts it in a more straightforward way: “*Все наши проблемы ... в наших головах*” [All our problems are in our heads]. If letters ever approximate public opinion, one has to admit that democratic reforms have made a full circle, returning to the point where Mikhail Gorbachev launched perestroika: what is needed is new thinking, not so much new material conditions.

The country vs. the state. Discussing issues facing the nation, letter-writers often make a distinction between the ways *the country* and *the state* are imagined: the former is presented as an animate object, while the latter is described as mechanical and inanimate. *The country* is populated by people, while *the state* is populated by citizens, persons filled with emotions or stuffed with ideological maxims that make them easily controlled and

directed. *Country* grows old, it can be sick, it might die, in which case a revival or even a resurrection becomes the order of the day. The *state*, on the contrary, has a more solid structure: it needs to be built (not tended); it includes certain mechanisms (not organs); it has foundations in the shape of laws; if it falls apart, it needs to be re-built (not cured, fed, or treated). Below are excerpts that illustrate construction metaphors:

Основа же правового государства - это совокупность не противоречащих друг другу законов. Однако правовая база не может быть непротиворечивой, если противоречива сама Конституция. (Izvestiia, 2000, March 14)

[The basis of the lawful state is the collection of laws, non-contradictory to one another. However, the legal base cannot be non-contradictory if contradictory is the Constitution itself.]

И мне всегда было приятно за Вас, ... за Ваше непреодолимое упорство в строительстве государства, которого в момент Вашего пришествия к власти еще не существовало. (Nezavisimaaia Gazeta, 2008, February 19)

[I was also pleased with you, ... your unsurpassable determination in building the state which at the moment of your coming to power did not exist.]

The distinction between the two projects – one tending to a living country and the other building a state – implies two kinds of responsibility. With the first project, the job is never done (unless the country dies, of course). As long as there is some life in it, it requires constant care. Those in charge cannot report the project completed and their responsibilities over. Instead, their job is judged satisfactory only if it continues. The project of building the state, on the other hand, urges those in charge to deliver results, which, as with any construction job, materializes in a completed, self-standing structure. When the structure does not need any scaffolding, the construction

team can call it a day. Because they presuppose radically different outcomes, the two conceptualizations are not interchangeable and reside in separate discourses: the lay discourse welcomes the ‘living country’ metaphor, while the discourse of authorities operates with the metaphor of construction.

The additional light on popular ideas of the state, government, and power is shed by a small corpus of metaphors borrowed from the domain of illnesses and diseases. Notably, this group of metaphors sees the country as a living body. It is used to present bureaucracy as a disease ‘*бороться с чиновничьей холерой*’ [fight the cholera of bureaucrats]; the Soviet political regime as old and feeble ‘*При всем маразме этого режима*’ [with all mental feebleness of this regime], dominant political ideas as a virus that spreads among people ‘*Попробуйте заразить столько новых идеями*’ [try to infect so many with new ideas].

If the political world is distant, with authorities being non-responsive and with public discussions turning to trivial matters, what do letter-writers hope for when they raise their voices? Do they send their letters because of a desire to see their names in print or is there a more noble cause? Research on the purposes of writing to newspapers or other media is scarce at best. A tangential remark by Buell (1975) pointed out that people write to the newspaper either because they are prompted by the publications or because they are in need of a psychological safety valve. But what do they aspire to accomplish via writing, which barriers to remove, which relations to create and which to discontinue?

Figuring out a writer’s goals is notoriously difficult since a person’s true intentions often go unmentioned or are purposely hidden in a letter. In addition, being a

lay rather than an institutional genre, letters to the editor are open to individual molding. One may write to express gratitude or to suggest an idea or an action; yet another may see a letter as a means of bringing justice. Some letters achieve their goals in the act of writing/publishing as do expressions of grievances, praises, and the like. Other goals take longer to accomplish. For those pieces, publication in a letters' section is the first step in a series of actions. Inquiries, for example, are successful only when they elicit a response. Inquiries that are made but not answered leave their intentions unfulfilled.

Table 4.5

*Letters' Goals across Time**

	1996	2000	2004	2008	Total
	<i>n (%)</i>	<i>n (%)</i>	<i>n (%)</i>	<i>n (%)</i>	<i>n (%)</i>
Recommendations	5 (6.76)	12 (13.48)	8 (11.76)	4 (6.35)	29 (9.86)
Complaints	3 (4.05)	2 (2.25)	0 (0.00)	8 (12.70)	13 (4.42)
Criticisms	19 (25.68)	32 (35.95)	14 (20.59)	11 (17.46)	76 (25.85)
Praise	4 (5.41)	3 (3.37)	1 (1.47)	4 (6.35)	12 (4.08)
Corrections	4 (5.41)	9 (10.11)	4 (5.88)	5 (7.94)	22 (7.48)
Predictions	3 (4.05)	1 (1.12)	5 (7.32)	1 (1.59)	10 (3.40)
Calls for action	5 (6.76)	2 (2.25)	2 (2.94)	2 (3.17)	11 (3.74)
Calls to attention	10 (13.51)	7 (7.87)	9 (13.24)	8 (12.7)	34 (11.56)
Grievances	8 (10.81)	0 (0.00)	2 (2.94)	3 (4.76)	13 (4.42)
Pleading	3 (4.05)	3 (3.37)	0 (0.00)	3 (4.76)	9 (3.06)
Sharing information	8 (10.81)	10 (11.24)	8 (11.76)	5 (7.94)	31 (10.54)
Expressing opinion	2 (2.70)	8 (8.99)	15 (22.06)	9 (14.29)	34 (11.56)
TOTAL	74 (100)	89 (100)	68 (100)	63(100)	294 (100)

The types of goals pursued by letter-writers provide a glimpse into lay perceptions of available and acceptable public actions as well as into the purposes of the public forum

itself. If letters can be seen as community bulletin boards highlighting current concerns among local people, they can also be seen as revealing core principles according to which such bulletin boards operate. From this perspective, a letter that announces the sighting of spring flowers or the first seasonal finch suggests a community life that is strikingly different from that in which letters seek protection from authorities, scold officials, or denounce neighbors. Letters' section could indeed be a safety valve, a bulletin board, a debating room or some other function deemed valuable to a given community.

Table 4.5 summarizes my findings about the letters' goals. Over a quarter of the letters in my sample contains critical remarks. Expressions of opinion and calls to public attention also figure prominently, each taking up 11.56% of the sample. Sharing stories becomes the third most popular reason to write to the newspaper (10.54% of the total), a reason felt slightly more compelling than giving recommendations and making suggestions (9.86%). Together, these five goals experienced a recent drop in popularity, with opinions taking most of the plunge in the year 2008, after having been steadily on the rise for several years. Are Russian letter writers growing less opinionated and more tempered, counseling their fellow-citizens or whomever is willing to listen? My data suggest that such a conclusion would be hasty and simplistic, given the sudden revival of goals that have not been pursued or pursued very rarely. Indeed, complaints and grievances have recently made a surprising comeback. So have praises (4.08%) and pleas (3.06%). Overall, six out of seven less frequent goals experienced a similar "developmental" curve: they all saw a sudden increase in demand.

This contrast between a drop in popularity among long-standing goals and a revival in the pursuit of ends that have been disregarded for some time suggests that the Russian public might be re-visioning letter-writing and its potency. A public forum in its present shape is still used for voicing opinions and criticisms, but the growth of complaints and pleas reminds one of a quotation from Vitaly Korotich cited earlier: Russians complain to the newspapers when they see that the government is not working or when they sense that the government is telling lies. However, the difference between the times in which Korotich's remarks were made and the current situation is considerable. Now, critics of government have nothing new to say or reveal. As a topic, complaints about corrupt officials are old hat. Corruption is part of life, not a news item in Russia. Also, viewing institutional politics as remote from the lives of ordinary people does not contribute to increasing civic engagement nor does it inspire collective action in defense of common interests. Under these circumstances, some letter-writers fall back onto the all-too-familiar mode of dealing with power, namely, pleading with authorities (or with newspapers who could then put pressure on authorities) to improve their individual conditions, leaving institutional politics, diagnosed as being in a systemic crisis, to politicians. The critical attitude, however, should not be easily discarded. If St. Augustine could not teach us about democracy, he definitely understood a good deal about human nature and knew that being angry at things as they are is an offspring of hope, not of despair. To gain a fuller picture of Russian popular attitudes toward politics, therefore, the tone of letters needs to be explored further, a task which I take on in the next section.

THE TONE OF THE FORUM

“Certain changes in style may indicate the gradual decline of democratic feeling, or reveal the ground swell of gathering crisis,” noted Lasswell (1968). Style - the arrangement of symbols and signs (p.38) - is not an ornamentation but “an indispensable feature of any configuration of meaning,” he argued. The striking homogeneity in style was characteristic of Soviet public discourse: patterns of opening and ending had an almost ritualistic character, set phrases were circulating at a high rate, quotations from the founders of Marxism-Leninism were mandatory. ‘Speaking Bolshevik’ (Fuerst, 2006), as some researchers labeled the language, required considerable skill and also demonstrated loyalty and a desire to belong. With a new country and a new government, Soviet political clichés no longer served the national purpose. Loyalty to the new regime had to find a different expression. After two decades of political transformation, have Russian citizens picked up this new democratic idiom? Have they developed new norms of addressing each other, of cooperating, of disagreeing, of resolving conflict? My analysis of the tone in letters suggests that the *Russian public forum as it exists on the letters’ page has become polarizingly judgmental*. Two major ‘tonalities’ feed this trend: letters are persistently critical and stubbornly ‘high-styled.’ Together, these features contribute to a public discourse that is less inclusive, less tolerant, and decidedly more elitist.

When plunging into an argument and confronting people, policies, and ideas, contemporary letters do not exhaust themselves in outrage but adopt a contemplative strand. Pointing out the wrongs and demanding justice, they easily complement criticism

with speculations about social problems and delineations of possible outcomes on a grand scale:

Эта клоунада с возрождением казачества (на религиозных дрожжах), с их планами «нэзалэжности» ведет к дальнейшему раздроблению российского общества, к нагнетанию злобы, насилия и прочих сопутствующих последствий. Маленький пример: по сообщению www.newsru.com/religy от 15.02.08, «дело о проведении молебна в воронежской школе...»: ученики 1-го (!) класса 3-й общеобразовательной школы пос. Грибановский после молебна избили Давида Перова за то, что тот не умеет креститься! При таких темпах «оцерковливания» и «воказачивания» скоро уже и на улицах городов, как в царские времена, появятся казачьи патрули с шашками и нагайками. В ответ, естественно, «рабочие» дружины и... опять гражданская война по полной программе. (Ogonyok, 2008, March 3)

[This circus with the revival of the Cossacks (religiously fermented), with their plans of 'indapendance' leads to a further fragmentation of Russian society, to an increasing anger, violence and other related consequences. A quick example: as reported by www.newsru.com/religy on 15.02.08, "A case of a mass in a Voronezh school," after the mass, the first (!) graders of the secondary school No. 3 in Gribanovsky beat up David Perov because he doesn't know how to make a cross sign! With such a pace of returning to the Church and to the Cossacks' rule, we will soon have Cossacks patrols on the city streets, with their sabers and cattle whips, like in the tsar's times. In response, naturally, [there will be] 'workers' brigades and ... again a civil war at a full swing.]

Quite a few letters in my sample are written in the spirit of 'righteous anger' against fellow citizens. Taking up a moralizing stance, their authors do not attempt to restore order and show recalcitrants the right path to follow. More often than not, the core of the dispute does not feature values or fundamental beliefs at all. Instead, Russians find particularly intolerant their fellow-citizens' poor judgment, faulty reasoning, and "wrong" ideas. And they do not miss a chance to attack popular misconceptions, as the *Ogonyok*'s reader in the excerpt below demonstrated:

Конечно, Виктор Фридман, ругая Америку, перехватил через край. Но меня больше всего поразили отклики. Бог мой! Читая ваши отзывы, дорогие сэры, я восхищался вашей любовью и преданностью к ВЕЛИКОЙ АМЕРИКЕ. Особенно мне понравились ваши рассуждения о кормящей руке. И еще мне очень понравилось место про виллы. Теперь мне стало понятно, чьи это виллы там, понимаешь, по всему побережью понастроены. Это домики простых американских парней из России. Они начали рабочими, а теперь... (Ogoniok, 2000, April 17)

[Of course, Viktor Fridman, scolding America, took it too far. But I was more surprised by the responses. Dear Lord! Reading your replies, dear sirs, I was amazed at your love and loyalty to the GREAT AMERICA. I especially liked your elaborations on the feeding hand. And also I liked the passage about villas. Now it is clear whose villas, you see, they have there along the coast. Those are little houses of ordinary Russian guys. They started as ordinary workers, but now...]

This observation regarding the public's faulty reasoning is both expected in light of previous research (Grim 2005 cited in Hauser 2007) and surprising given the infamous Russian ability to embrace apparent contradictions (Janack, 1996). The paradoxes and incompatibilities pervasive in Russian discourse in the mid-1990s and explained as part of Russian rhetorical culture (Janack, 1996, p. 223) apparently have implications that are too serious to ignore.

One explanation of the insidious criticism lies with what Clayman (2004) calls 'relational baggage.' Detached from their audience by the conventions of the genre, letter-writers can hardly expect an extended exchange of messages or a long-term relationship unfolding on the letters' page. This, in principle, can contribute to an adversarial tone. On the newspaper page, the invisible audience and the author's unlikely future relationship with it may interfere with the cultural practice of linking incompatible parts in some working model and spur criticism of what otherwise could have been

overlooked. In the context of the letter cited above, criticism of popular misconceptions about life abroad could have been less harsh had it been issued face-to-face or had the participants had some prospects for future interaction (or, in Clayman's words, if they had carried some relational baggage). Instead, with his/her letter as the only available means of reaching his seriously mistaken (if not altogether ignorant) fellow-citizens, the writer penned clearly outrageous comments.

If no or little relational baggage unleashes criticism, its presence warrants, not blocks it, as my data show. In the letter quoted below, a long-standing relationship with the newspaper is cited by the authors as permission to follow up with critical remarks:

Виталий Товиевич!

Хотелось бы заметить, что тональность ответа Миграняну не достойна уважаемой нами "Независимой газеты", многолетним автором которой является Андраник Мовсесович, да и мы тоже. Мы не всегда согласны с нашим давним товарищем, мы тоже склонны иной раз поправить коллегу, "улучшить" и "усовершенствовать" его. Важно при этом не заходить слишком далеко. Ибо, как говорил один немецкий философ, "многие пытались изгнать из себя дьявола, но при этом сами превратились в свиней". (Nezavisimaia Gazeta, 1996, June 14)

[Vitaly Tovievish![We] would like to point out that the tone of [your] response to Migranyan does not fit the respectable Nezavisimaia Gazeta whose author of many years Andranik Movsesovich is, and so are we. We don't always agree with our old comrade; we are also inclined some time to correct a colleagues, to 'improve' him and 'modernize' him. It is important not to go too far here. For, as one German philosopher said, 'many tried to exorcise the devil out of themselves, but turned into swine doing so!']

Here, the letter-writers express their dissatisfaction with the tone of a publication which, in their opinion, fell 'below' the standards maintained by respectable *Nezavisiamia Gazeta*. They justify their comments by mentioning that they are not merely readers who

hold the paper in high esteem and, therefore, feel hurt to have caught it in a subversive act; they are its authors, and, thus, their own reputations suffer along with the reputation of the paper. Having built a rhetorical platform based on a long-term relationship, the letter then reminds editors about the norms of propriety.

Another frequent target of criticism is the choice of published materials. Readers promptly send a rejoinder when conventional rules of decency, as they understand them, are violated. Those, however, are not the rules of civility which editors elsewhere are reportedly trying to maintain by screening off racist, sexist, ageist, and other discriminating comments and to make sure that participants on the forum do not lash out against any group or individual (Richardson & Franklin, 2003, 2004). The Russian public turns against publications they see as potentially dangerous, that is, publications that set 'bad' examples or that allegedly promote anti-social behavior:

Я понимаю, что жизнь есть жизнь, что деньги есть деньги, и то, что сделала О.Б., в сущности, ерунда, в особенности на фоне того, что вообще происходит в стране. Поразило меня другое: а зачем писать об этом? (Ogoniok, 2000, March 23)

[I understand that life is life, that money is money, and that what O.B. did, is essentially a trifle, especially in comparison with what is going on in the country in general. A different matter surprised me: why to write about it?]

Russian letter-writers appear to want a press that is an efficient public agent and an advocate, capable of much more than merely publishing dry reports:

Вопрос в редакцию или автору статьи. Прост до боли. Вы что-то намерены дальше делать с этой вопиющей историей? Зачем вы писали эту статью? Чтоб привлечь общественное внимание? К чему приведет это внимание? Прокурорская проверка туда поедет? Шапки полетят, кто-то должностей лишится? Спортивные школы откроются? Детские лагеря?

Всё выльется в пустопорожнюю интеллигентскую брехню. (Ogoniok, 2008, February 18)

[A question to the editors or to the article's author. Painfully simple. What are you intending to do about this horrible story? What did you write it for? To call public attention? What will this attention lead to? The prosecutor's office will go there? The tops will be knocked down, somebody will lose their post? Sports clubs will open? Children's [summer] camps? Everything will end up in empty intelligentsia's rattling.]

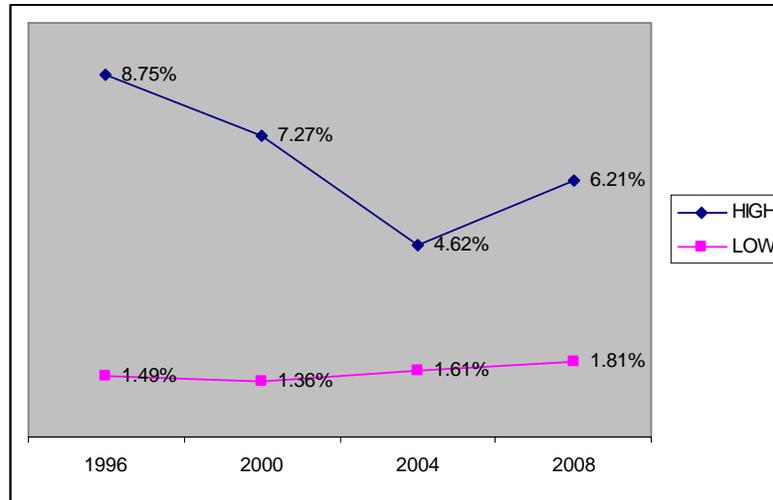
In this excerpt, the letter-writer is rather unhappy with conversation in the media that fails to generate actions. His/her dissatisfaction lies not so much in the domains of decency and propriety but in the political timidity of the press, its refusal to question power and in its failure to instigate administrative sanctions.

A wish for a more efficient press comes hand-in-hand with an increase in high style wording (Figure 4.1), suggesting a troubling shift to a more orderly and 'cleaner' public space, a space from which dark thoughts are omitted.

When a heavily censored and confined Soviet public discourse was breached by the informal style, its "frozen formulas" were pushed to the periphery and the vernacular began "to rise above the ground" (Zbenovich 2007, p.86). The spread of colloquial language in the public realm did not replace wooden political language overnight. For quite some time, the remnants of the latter were visible, but it progressively lost its ground as matters of governance became everyone's business and hence were no longer fenced off into a special field by a special language. During this time, Russian political culture was trying out new democratic forms and the downward spiral of the high-style was unmistakable (see Figure 1).

Figure 4.1

High and Low Vocabulary in Letters*⁴



But recently the old, official language has experienced a sudden comeback. A screening mechanism that blocks ‘improper’ ways of talking in public has been oiled and put back to work. Examples below illustrate this development.

Идя навстречу новому президенту РФ, хочется надеяться, что в будущем у нас в стране сохранятся и будут крепнуть те ценности, к признанию высшего приоритета которых мы пришли непростым путём, которые складывались десятилетиями через осмысление исторических ошибок, перегибов и трагедий (Nezavisimaaia Gazeta, 2008, March 4)

[Welcoming a new president of the RF, one would want to hope that in the future in our country those values to the recognition of whose top priority we have come in a hard way, which formed over the decades through understanding of historical mistakes, excesses, and tragedies, will be reserved and grow stronger.]

В номере "Известий" от 15 января 2008 г. я с интересом прочел статью Ксении Фокиной "Кто защитит защитников Бронзового солдата". Любой здравомыслящий человек понимает, что дело защитников Солдата носит

⁴ Percentages in Figure 1 are calculated as a number of sentence containing marked vocabulary (low or high) to the total number of sentences x 100

исключительно политический характер, и те, кто спланировал перенос памятника, на самом деле нацелены на пересмотр итогов Второй мировой войны. Важно не упустить инициативу и довести до широкой международной общественности объективную правовую оценку этой коллизии. Обратит внимание СБ ООН, что Эстония прямо нарушает букву Устава ООН (ст. 106 и 107). Это дает России право потребовать от СБ ООН незамедлительного принятия в отношении Эстонии мер, предусмотренных Уставом ООН. И нужно это срочно сделать. (Izvestiia, 2008, February 20)

[In the issue dated from January 15, 2008, I read, with a great pleasure, Ksenia Fokina's "Who will defend the Bronze Soldier." Any clear-thinking person understands that the case of Soldier's defenders has an exclusively political character and that those who planned the transportation of the monument aimed in fact at the revision of the outcomes of the World War II. It is important not to let the initiative slip out of our hands and to let the broad international community about know the objective legal evaluation of this collision. [It is important to] draw attention of the UN Security Council that Estonia directly violates the UN Constitution (Articles 106 and 107). This gives Russia a right to demand from the Security Council immediate measures regarding Estonia stipulated by the UN Constitution. And [one] needs to do it as an emergency matter.]

These two excerpts, published in two different papers in 2008, are packed with formulaic expressions of a distinctly Soviet vintage. Both writers have successfully resurrected long evaluative chains that were previously used to mark people as reasonable, their leadership wise, their ideology correct, their public events historical, their response to acts of injustice immediate: *любой здравомыслящий человек* [any sensible person]; *широкая международная общественность* [a broad international community]; *незамедлительное принятие* [expedient adoption]. Excessive nominalization and 'stone-walling' that significantly added to the wooden character of the Soviet political language has also made it back: *дело (N) защитников (N) Солдата (N)* [the case of Soldier monument defenders], *пересмотр (N) итогов (N) Второй мировой войны*

(*N*)[a revision of the Second World War outcomes], *буква (N) Устава (N) ООН (N)*[in accordance with the UN Constitution], *принятие (N) мер (N) в отношении (N) Эстонии (N)*[adoption of measures regarding Estonia].

Several forces possibly contribute to this shift. First, the rise in high style could be produced by the older generation whose correspondence received more ‘coverage.’ A recent pensioners’ movement against ‘monitarization’ that surprised the country could have encouraged older readers to write to the newspaper more often and also prompted editors to give their letters more space. It is also possible that with the general distancing from politics and with a young generation reading less and getting their information elsewhere, the older cohort with their life-long relationship with newspapers and with their habits of sending letters to authorities is now the most prolific group among newspapers’ audiences. If the latter is the case (and letters quoted above can indeed be attributed to older writers), this cohort, seasoned in Soviet public language, could be exercising it in letters. Third, the norms of public conversation in Russia could be giving in to the pressures of purists who welcome more formalized expressions.

Whether these forces interacted or whether only one of them propelled change is a question that merits attention if they are consequential, that is, if they enable/disable certain social roles and relations. According to Cmiel, in a democratic public sphere “a diversity of styles is the norm” (1990, p. 13). A trend toward a cleaner, more decent, civilized conversation runs the risk of becoming exclusive and elitist. Yet, lay discourse is also known for accommodating a pastiche (Ono & Sloop, 1995) that relies on borrowing elements from the surrounding discourses to construct its unique forms “out of

cultural fragments” (p.23). Thus, it is the proportion in which those forms are being mixed that causes some concern. If public discourse reflects the conditions of its production, the growing number of discursive features inherited from less democratic times in Russian history should sound a warning about changing forces on the political battlefield. It is worrisome indeed if the rigid language of the totalitarian society is gradually returning from the periphery and reclaiming positions it had formerly lost to new forms and modes of public communication. Whether those changes are here to stay or whether they signal a momentary relapse will become clearer with time. So far, the year 2008 stands out in my sample as a major departure from democratic practices, a departure that welcomes the high style and that thrives on judgmental comments.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Have the Russian people traded democracy for stability and well-being? My data do not show that to be the case. Have they have fallen asleep? I have observed the opposite. Have they turned disaffected and indifferent to the fate of their country? Not quite. Their letters reveal a public that is outspoken (even if judgmental), alert to public affairs, and on the lookout for their fellow-citizens. Russian letter-writers believe in the power of an expressed opinion. They also seem to believe that their fellow citizens should hear their stories. Despite the fact that the number of issues open for discussion is shrinking, that denunciatory criticism is high, and that politics is routinely considered a sphere distant from everyday life, the public forum on the letters’ pages is functioning with considerable rigor.

The Russian public has also come a long way to produce a forum. Earlier studies of Russian newspapers rarely discussed letters to the editor as being forum-like. Instead, researchers viewed letters as a window on the “mechanism by which Soviet state and society interacted” (Fuerst, 2006), as an element of bureaucratic governance (Kozlov, 1996), as a long-distance conference (Sokolov, 1998) serving to gauge (and possibly manage) public sentiment, or as an individual communication with authorities (Fitzpatrick, 1996a, 1996b). Additionally, Soviet letters have been searched for evidence of dissent or of popular conformity but rarely were looked upon as a means of developing a space where the public can gather and discuss ideas.

But is theirs a truly democratic forum? Democratic practice elsewhere has only known forums with serious deviations from the ideal (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2002b). In most democracies, debate is often orchestrated by newspaper editors. Its form and content depend on the editorial staff choosing pieces and arranging them in a way that inevitably reflects what the editorial team considers reasonable and acceptable (Richardson & Franklin, 2004). Because editors privilege particular forms of expression, their practices have also been found to deviate from the principles of deliberative democracy (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2002a, 2002b). Without the editorial make-up, however, the public conversation would be difficult to trace since letters tend to express isolated positions instead of responding to other readers’ viewpoints (Raeymaeckers, 2005). Given such a poor record of public forums, it is not surprising that the letters’ sections in Russian newspapers have not yet become a powerful crucible for democracy.

Is there a hope for a more democratic future in Russia? I believe so. The Russian public has not abandoned spaces for public debate. Even though it now raises fewer concerns there, it uses the opportunity to address the national audience whenever change seems possible. Discussions in the press do not dissect political programs and yet politics is kept on the agenda. Russian public conversations are quite uneven, combining thin and thick patches, to borrow an analogy from Benjamin Barber. By exercising their democratic voices and participating in the forum, Russians will eventually learn to become more public-minded, more open, more inclusive, and more tolerant.

Becoming democratic is a long project, and it is especially long when one takes into account its starting point in Russia. The important consideration is whether new, allegedly democratic institutions in Russia will allow for a new democratic people to emerge, whether they will support a transformative process of turning subjects into citizens. To find out more about the possibility of this transformative process, I will now turn to the genre of editorials.

CHAPTER FIVE

EDITORIALS

A 2005 poll conducted by the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center showed that 82 percent of the Russian public wanted censorship. That figure might have included quite a few Russians who were stunned by the coarse sex and violence that has become common in television programming in particular, but it certainly gave the government the warrant of people's support were it to place restrictions on the media. And such restrictive measures are not hard to find in contemporary Russia. For four consecutive years, the Freedom House survey (2007) ranks the country as *not free* (Gastil, 2007, p.659). "Although the Constitution provides for freedom of speech," stated the Freedom House report in 2007, "the government continues to put pressure on the dwindling number of media outlets that are still critical of the Kremlin. [...]" (p.660). A tally of legal abuses against journalists run by The Glasnost Defense Foundation lists murders, assaults, arrests, prosecutions, attack on the premises, eviction of businesses, confiscation of the issues, and obstruction of publications, to name but a few examples.

Fortunately, descriptions of a democratic roll back in Russia appear alongside reports of positive change. According to Leon Aron (2007), one finds in Russia "a robust print media across the entire political spectrum" (p. 248-9). Many adamant critics of the regime "do not seem to have any difficulty in getting their views published, as well as broadcast and televised" (p.249). Moreover, he adds, "although in the past few years, following 'hints' from the Kremlin, some publishers and advertisers have 'toned down' their content or closed their outlets altogether, many – indeed most – have not."

Has the Freedom House accidentally picked up too dark a palette to paint Russia? Has there in fact been positive development in the Russian media since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the removal of the Party's ideological straightjacket? Which picture of the Russian media is more accurate? To answer these questions one would need to examine multiple pools of data, interview reporters, editors, public officials, read legal documentation, regulations, statutes, court rulings, police reports, compare official press-releases and print and TV coverage by both private and state-owned stations.

My project offers an alternative vantage point from which to explore political change in Russia. It examines language on the printed page and its capacity to capture, reflect, and embody moves towards a more democratic society. Here, I am asking not whether the government is putting constraints on the media but whether the newspaper's coverage shows alterations when the alleged constraints are implemented. Mindful of the ideological role that Soviet newspapers were vested with, I look at the newspapers' editorials to gain insights into their role in the political world. My data do not allow me to tell stories about the heroism of reporters getting first-hand information or about courageous editors signing onto print materials that contradict the official version of events. Nevertheless, the texts I look at provide ample opportunity for a detailed exploration of the democratizing press and the language of the 'un-free' press, editorial practices, standards of objectivity, editors' relationships with their sources, and some others. My texts also reveal several surprises about the role that contemporary Russian newspapers play in helping the government govern. However, before I lay out the findings, I will present a brief overview of Soviet journalistic practices in the late 1980s

and the early 1990s, the years immediately preceding those from which I gathered by my data. This overview will serve as an anchor point in a later discussion of the democratizing process in Russia.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On the one hand, journalism practiced in the Soviet Union resembled journalism practiced in the West: journalists were professionals in service of the State, putting out materials for consumption by their fellow citizens (Wolfe, 2005). Like their counterparts in the West, Soviet journalists specialized in “descriptions of the contemporary moment for mass publication” (p.5). Newspapers appeared regularly, were led by editors who were “ultimately responsible for the contents of their publications,” and carried a variety of texts and images that were laid out, as Wolfe found, according to a certain “remarkably consistent” internal logic (ibid).

On the other hand, there were differences between the Soviet press and the press in the western world, the major one being its supervision by the Communist Party. Soviet newspapers were to follow the party’s line and interpret events according to the accepted vision of Marxism-Leninism. Following the party line translated into publishing official texts (for example, speeches), the meeting reports of the Politburo, and decisions by the Party’s bodies at various levels. The notion of objectivity was understood only as the interpretation of reality from class positions. The news was in many senses “timeless”: the perspective was preset, the social process was interpretable according to one correct script, and participants’ roles were prescribed and determined by theory. Timelessness had a happy outlook: no negative information or disruptive social issues could make their

way into the public conversation; the media were supposed to present society as happy and stable, leadership as wise, the future as certain. If problems were ever mentioned, they were labeled as “isolated defects” that could easily be fixed. Newspaper language was replete with quotes, clichés, and upbeat slogans.

But the newspapers played a more exalted role than being mere channels of party wisdom. Free from market competition and dependency on the “money-bag,” Soviet newspapers had a particular relationship with their readers and the government. They were expected to “contribute to the creation of an ideal, socialist society” by disseminating information, instilling Marxist ideas, and guiding the behavior of Soviet citizens to help them become loyal citizens (Wolfe, 2005).

A genre vested with the mission of guiding the audience and instructing it about the party line was the editorial. The term *peredovaia statia* (editorial) as a synonym of *rukovodiashcha statia* (leader, leading article) was used as early as the mid 19th century (Pöppel, 2007), but under Communist Party supervision, editorials became a genre that occupied a leading position in political communication as an “instrument in the political struggle of the party” (p.45). In the Soviet tradition, editorials combined broad generalizations, a thorough analysis of facts, and an accessible and colorful presentation (ibid). They dealt with politics in general, but did not shy away from addressing practical matters. Appearing on the front page, they often summarized materials published in a given issue or in preceding issues (Kruglov, 1955). Their pragmatic functions constituted a ‘hidden directive’ (Koscheeva, 2001, cited in Pöppel, 2007). The texts were peppered with words like *rukovostso* (the authorities, the ruling group), *splochenny* (united), and

linia (line) (Pöppel, 2007, p.103). Yet, those in charge were not emphasized: the word *apparat* and its derivatives, found Pöppel, were very much taboo. The party's guiding hand was always felt even if invisible and implicit.

In the post-Soviet times, as old constraints were largely removed or loosened, journalism of a different type was expected to emerge, as were new forms and novel genres. Already in the early 1990s, according to Murray (1992, 1994), several typical genres of the Soviet press lost their *raison d'être* and became redundant, with short front-page news items - *zametki* – being successfully transformed into news stories of the type closely resembling those practiced in the western press. Other genres, including editorials, were also adjusting to the new political environment although some totalitarian residue of the Soviet official language was still present (Ryazanova-Clark & Wade, 1999, p. 326).

Examining the transformed Russian media, Wolfe (2005) suggested that they should be looked upon as sites of “new strategies of governing” in Russia (p.178). Applying Foucauldian concept of governmentality, he observed that the transition in Russia can be described as a transition from socialism to capitalism, but also from one set of governing tasks and strategies to another, from “Gorbachev's brand of charismatic Leninism” to the liberal government of post-perestroika's era (ibid). Thus, an important issue facing Russian newspapers is not the struggle with censorship. That is an old practice of the government with which journalists are familiar and which both they and the public learned to navigate. At stake is their participation in the shifting discourses that support the new Russian government.

Following Wolfe's lead, I look at editorials with four questions to answers: (1) Has there been a discursive change in editorials since Russia's independence? (2) Which specific rhetorical features and discursive strategies have changed during that time and which ones have resisted transformation? (3) What does that change or stability of discourse tell us about the genre's role in the process of democratization? and (4) What practical implications can be drawn from this short history of Russian editorials?

It may well be wrong to believe that the tasks of current governance differ from those under socialism. Public affairs scholarship might offer more and subtle insights into differences in purely managerial matters. The job of communication scholars is to assess discourses through which governing is accomplished and to determine the contribution of those discursive practices to social practices of maintaining public spaces for open discussions and a free exchange of opinion inclusive of many voices and many tongues, of a variety of issues and concerns, and, ultimately, of helping a democratic nation emerge.

Based on the analysis of 212 editorials collected during four political campaigns, this chapter describes the discursive practices of editorialists and their contribution to the democratic project in Russia. Overall, my analysis disagrees with the role of the Russian media as Putin's victims, a description the Freedom House assigns to them. The media are not repressed into silence. But they are excluded from the political club and largely ignored by major power players. Their practices, unfortunately, do not amount to a disinterested service to a greater public good. Instead, their struggle for political power disempowers the people and contributes to the current configuration of the political

system that leaves politics in the hands of professional politicians. My analysis reveals four major trends in contemporary editorial discourse:

1. Russian editorialists are mesmerized by the political world.
2. Editorials present the political world as structured in a peculiar way.
3. Editorials do not repeat the government's line and remain critical of politicians.
4. Editorialists have become more engaging and interactive, but they envision a contemplative, somewhat ironic reader who appreciates being informed about politics but also abstains from active participation in it.

In what follows, I will lay out evidence for each trend and discuss their significance for the project of democratization.

TREND 1: RUSSIAN EDITORIALISTS ARE MESMERIZED BY THE POLITICAL WORLD

It is hard to find a topic demanding more attention during the election season than elections themselves. In light of a recent, widely publicized 'crack down' on the media by President Putin, one might wonder if Russian elections are now run in some exceptional way, with newspapers banned and TV restricted in its coverage of the campaign. There is no shortage of gloomy reports and even gloomier forecasts of the nation's political future. Andrew Wilson (2005), for instance, has recently concluded that not only is Russia a fake democracy but that politics has turned virtual in the hands of political consultants. My analysis of editorials shows that quietly orchestrated 'virtual' elections have not yet happened in Russia. Candidates might have faced variable attention from the media; some of them have been unable to buy time on TV to leverage their virtual presence, but

newspapers’ editorials do not keep silent when it comes to politics. In fact, throughout the time period analyzed here, editorialists have remained captivated by the political world. The evidence for this conclusion comes from two observations: the topics addressed by the writers and the discursive resources tapped into when producing those texts.

Politics remains the most prominent topic of the editorial column. Over four elections, topics concerning the political world (candidates, elections, political opposition, authorities, laws and regulations, political institutions, and the like) have attracted more attention from editorialists than all other issues combined. As Table 5.1 shows, in 2004 politics took the center stage in three quarters of all editorials. In 2008, the dominance of political matters was somewhat diminished but no other issue has been able to compel enough attention to outweigh interest to politics. So far, despite the alleged restrictions, editorialists continue to make politics the primary topic of their conversation.

Table 5.1

Editorial Topics across Time

		Politics	Life Spheres	Social Climate	Mixed
1996	n=67	47	4	2	14
	%	70.15	5.97	2.99	20.89
2000	n=44	30	8	4	2
	%	68.18	18.18	9.09	4.55
2004	n=47	36	6	1	4
	%	76.60	12.77	2.13	8.51
2008	n=54	32	10	2	10
	%	59.26	18.52	3.70	18.52
TOTAL	N=212	145	28	9	30
	%	68.40	13.21	4.25	14.15

Of course, the prominence of the topic does not tell much about the content of the discussion or its potential effects on the audience: one can attend to politics and politicians but discuss only trivial matters or give preferential treatment to one politician at the expense of all others. In a section devoted to the content of editorials, I will discuss these concerns in more detail. Here, my data clearly demonstrate the overwhelming presence of political topics in editorials.

Editorials draw on multiple discursive resources. An editorial in a contemporary Russian newspaper is rarely a piece written in a single voice, either that of the paper or the editor himself. Despite using both the editorial *we* and private *I*, editorialists frequently bring in other voices and justify their claims by citing various sources. To bolster their statements, editorial writers, much like reporters, quote public officials, cite documents, refer to facts that belong to the stock of common knowledge (works of art and literature, for instance), and even air rumors and hearsay. In their reliance on other texts, editorials are truly intertextual, but they increasingly draw on discourses of one domain, namely the spoken word of the authorities and those close to them.

Across the 12 years in my sample, official sources have remained the most popular at all times (52.18 %) (see Table 5.2). Editorials quote officials directly; they comment on official statements; they speculate about what the authorities could have said on the occasion. The next voice that editorialists give room to belongs to groups and organizations (9.17%). They are five to six times “quieter” than the governmental word and closely followed by polls and unspecified sources.

Table 5.2*Sources Cited in Editorials across Time*

		1996	2000	2004	2008	TOTAL
Officials	n	69	38	84	48	239
	%	<i>40.12</i>	<i>48.72</i>	<i>67.20</i>	<i>57.83</i>	<i>52.18</i>
Groups	n	19	5	9	9	42
	%	<i>11.05</i>	<i>6.41</i>	<i>7.20</i>	<i>10.84</i>	<i>9.17</i>
Documents	n	7	1	2	1	11
	%	<i>4.07</i>	<i>1.28</i>	<i>1.60</i>	<i>1.20</i>	<i>2.40</i>
Research	n	20	4	15	1	40
	%	<i>11.63</i>	<i>5.13</i>	<i>12.0</i>	<i>1.20</i>	<i>8.73</i>
Media	n	15	10	5	5	35
	%	<i>8.72</i>	<i>12.82</i>	<i>4.00</i>	<i>6.02</i>	<i>7.64</i>
Ordinary people	n	8	5	0	0	13
	%	<i>4.65</i>	<i>6.41</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>2.83</i>
Celebrities	n	8	1	3	3	15
	%	<i>4.65</i>	<i>1.28</i>	<i>2.40</i>	<i>3.61</i>	<i>3.28</i>
Rumors	n	11	6	1	5	23
	%	<i>6.39</i>	<i>7.69</i>	<i>0.80</i>	<i>6.02</i>	<i>5.02</i>
Undisclosed source	n	15	8	6	11	40
	%	<i>8.72</i>	<i>10.26</i>	<i>4.80</i>	<i>13.25</i>	<i>8.73</i>
TOTAL (N)		172	78	125	83	458

Studying Russian regional newspapers, Pietilainen (2002) observed a similar pattern of “giving space” to the candidates themselves instead of providing overarching commentary. He explained this practice by the role of politicians in society. In contemporary Russia, he remarks, “the words of the politics have such a status that they can be presented in the public sphere almost on their own” (p.460). While my data agree with the centrality of statements by politicians, other observations in my dataset warn

against a direct, positive link between the number of political quotes and the status of politics in Russian society. A major factor severing such a link is the tone of the presentation that often undermines the message that politicians are sending.

Another trend in editorials is the use of research results (survey, polls, predictions of electoral results) that forecast voters' behavior or estimate chances of electoral victory of the competing candidates. As Table 5.2 shows, surveys were popular in 1996 (11.63%). Since then their popularity has somewhat diminished, and in 2008 they were mentioned only once within the nine weeks of sampling. Yet, overall, some form of public opinion data still make up a third of the most frequent sources of supportive information (sharing that position with undisclosed sources).

A third important observation about the use of sources in editorials is the complete disappearance of lay voices from those texts during the past two selections: in 1996, they stood at 4.65% and even grew a bit "louder" during the following elections. From 2004 on, they were missing from the list of voices included in the editorials.

Two developments in Russian media are likely to be responsible for these features of the editorial genre. First is the genre stabilization. With the turmoil of perestroika over, editorialists have worked out new contours of the genre and prescribed new functions. Now, the genre is oriented towards political circles. Although data presented here do not find editorials merely channeling (in a long-standing Soviet fashion) political propaganda, the genre clearly has not lost its elitist tone. Ordinary voices, independent sources, and alternative interpretations of events are accidental inclusions. Editorialists weave the story of the elites from words recognizable by elites. This, however, does not

mean that the story may be recognized and accepted by elites as their own. Nor does it mean that editorialists mimic the Kremlin's version of the political world.

An alternative explanation of the recent thinning of a multi-vocal texture in editorials is connected to the political economy of the media. Newspapers are renegotiating their relationship with the state, their playing field, and their functions. As the political affiliation and political weight of their patrons shift or as newspaper's patrons change, so too does the editorial policy and views the newspaper promotes. A case in point is *Ogonyok*, which experienced a dramatic drop in editorials in the year 2000 followed the corporate change of hands. Until the staff won the battle for the brand, its editorials did not return to their traditional form. But the newspapers are not guaranteed readership even with powerful patrons. How do editorialists present the political world? What actors populate it? What roles are reserved for them? What do editorialists ultimately do with their descriptions of politics? The following section will provide answer to these questions.

TREND 2: EDITORIALS STRUCTURE THE POLITICAL WORLD IN A PECULIAR WAY

Following the tradition of Russian publicists, contemporary editorialists use language that is rich in images and cultural references, alludes to historical events, and quotes from works of literature. At the same time, editorialists respond to current political events to describe what is often hard to describe. One of the conceptual tools suitable for accomplishing this formidable task is metaphor. Metaphors allow us to borrow descriptions of one, familiar domain (say, water), map them onto the elements and

processes in another, less familiar domain (say, money), and come up with phrases like “financial flows,” for instance. Editorialists in my sample use metaphorical language frequently and diversely. They turn to metaphors to describe candidates and consultants, campaigning and voting, and the political sphere in general. Some of their metaphors are of ordinary coinage and rely on well-established parallels between conceptual domains. This ordinary coinage does not give any particular insights into the Russian political world. Instead, it reveals similarities with images marshaled to describe electoral campaigns elsewhere. For example, metaphors of an electoral campaign as a war or a battle, as a horse-race, or as a spectacle are common in the English language as well. Other metaphors speak to the creativity of their authors but because of their rarity should best be considered idiosyncratic language use .

Four major features characterize the way Russian editorialists describe the political world:

1. They use three major frames: a battlefield, a theatre/show, and a game.
2. The frames selectively highlight politicians and ignore other elements in the political world. Thus, if a war, no soldiers or casualties are mentioned; if a theatre, no stage-hands exist; if a game, no referees are present to judge how strictly the players abide by the rules.
3. The idea of a national political project has shifted away from that of a constructed entity.
4. The past is always discussed in negative terms but the future’s prospects are not too upbeat either.

To draw parallels with the language used in lay discourse and to facilitate further discussion of the two genres (letters to the editor and editorials), I will focus my description on metaphors of the country (especially on attitudes toward the past and the future and the national project) and of the political world (attending to its participants and relations among them).

The country. Over the period of time under analysis, metaphors describing the nation have shifted from those presenting it as an *object*, to metaphors portraying it as a *living being*. In 1996, images of the country falling apart, of being sawed into parts, were quite common. Gradually, editorialists found a more fruitful way to describe the country – as a body capable of being autonomous and, at times, as capable of surprising actions, as two examples below illustrate:

Это будет очень короткий период массового "карнавального" разворовывания и распилки страны. Результат которого - нарастание напряженности, конфликты и распад ее останков. (Izvestiia, 2004, February 25)

[There will be a very short period of mass ‘carnavalesque’ marauding and sawing the country apart. The results of which – escalation of tension, conflicts, and decay of its remnants.]

Россия может подняться с колен и как следует огреть (Izvestiia, 2008, February 1)

[Russia can get back on its feet and hit with full might.] (A quote by President Putin)

The shift from inanimate to animate entities could have been of minor importance had it not been accompanied by a parallel change in tone. When the country is discussed as an

object, it is likely to be described as being on the edge of dismantling, disintegrating, or even decaying. When it is discussed as a live being, descriptions tend to be more positive.

A similar shift in contextual tone toward a more positive one occurred with metaphors of the state: when the state is conceptualized as an inanimate object or as a mechanism, it evokes negative associations; rethinking it as a living being puts it into a positive light:

Вся эта история о том, как наша скрипучая госмашина наехала на Британский Совет, вызывает иронию и удивление не только на Западе (Ogoniok, 2008, February 4)

[This whole story is about how screeching state machine ran into the British Council produces irony and surprise not only in the West.]

Первый срок по сути - это медленная, очень осторожная и постепенная реанимация Российского государства. Начиная с тех базовых элементов, без которых дальнейшее движение невозможно. (Izvestiia, 2004, February 25)

[The first term, in essence is a slow, very careful and gradual revival of the Russian state. Starting from those basic elements, without which the further movement is impossible.]

Images of the road are a rhetorical staple in discussions of any country's future. Here, Russian editorials do not exhibit extraordinary creativity but follow a well-trodden path, evaluating politicians on their ability to see the road ahead (*Зюганов не видит пути вперед* [Zyuganov does not see the road ahead]) or assessing the current situation in terms of forward or backward movement (*Среди сторонников движения вперед по пути реформ* [among the supporter of forward movement along the road of reforms 1996]; *рассматривают будущие выборы как шаг назад в развитии*

демократии [look at the future elections as a step backwards in the development of democracy]; *едва ли не заведшей страну в тупик кавказской политики* [almost lead the country into the dead-end of Caucasus politics]).

Metaphors featuring a dead-end, common in the political discourse of the 1990s (Kaul 1998), lost their attractiveness and explanatory power by the end of the decade. But the image of the road persisted. New metaphors conceptualize the road not as a straight line with minimal obstacles, distractions, or surprises in the form of bumps, road-works, exits or merging lanes but as a road that requires the full attention of travelers: certain stretches of the road are dangerous (*Россия находится на опасном участке своего исторического пути* [Russia is at the dangerous stretch of its historical path]), intersections are multiple (*до очередного исторического перекрестка* [until the next historical intersection]) and sometimes hard to navigate (*перед сложной развилкой* [facing a difficult intersection]). Staying the course is exceedingly important. Detours are possible, but getting back on track is highly praised (*выйти на магистраль развития на свое - когда-то потерянное – место* [to return to the course of development at its own – once lost – place]). Among recent conceptualizations of the road and the movement forward is the idea of heroic effort, a breakthrough, necessary to overcome past obstacles and roadblocks. This stress on innovation is evident in a growing number of metaphors of combat that come up in discussions of the nation's future: *перечень из 8 "узловых моментов", необходимых для прорыва* [a list of 8 “critical movements” necessary for a breakthrough]; *на прорывных направлениях развития технологий* [on the breakthrough directions of the technological development].

Metaphors of the road often orient discourse participants toward some final destination. Alternatively, they can emphasize the movement itself without ever mentioning the endpoint of the journey. Russian editorialists appear to opt for the middle choice: to talk about the destination without naming it. When the starting point of the journey is mentioned, its descriptions tend to revive negative memories of the past, which are strikingly stripped of any positive mention of the experience that has enabled fellow-travelers to move forward. The past is most often associated with the abyss: *наша страна, Россия, едва выбравшись из такой пропасти* [our country, Russia, barely climbed out of such an abyss]; *пока она не ударилась о дно пропасти* [until it hit the bottom of the abyss]; *страна вышла из кризиса глубиной в 43 процента ВВП* [the country came out of a crisis [that was] 43 % GDP deep].

Negative descriptions of the past are not always set off by positive discussions of the future. Positive images of the final destination toward which the nation is heading or, for that matter, a visionary vocabulary, did not surface in my data. If editorialists mention the future at all, they do not venture into elaborate predictions of what it might look like: *И даже оставшись совсем один, он будет отстаивать свою позицию. Просто потому, что она у него есть. А еще – светлая мечта о российском экономическом чуде. Которое, верит Греф, не за горами. Если, конечно, делом заниматься* [And even if left to stand along, he will defend his own position. Simply because he has one. As well as a bright dream about Russia' economic miracle. Which, as Gref believes, is not behind the mountains. Provided, if course, one doesn't sit around].

Politics and politicians. Describing Russian political circles, editorialists find plenty of subjects to talk about: incumbents and opposition leaders, reforms and bureaucratic tangles, as well as campaign efforts and projected voting results. As with metaphors of the country, the language used in descriptions of politics does not dazzle readers with originality in every instance. Instead, it reproduces the patterns common in other languages and other political systems. In line with those patterns, politics is imagined in several major ways: as a game with politicians as players, as a theatrical performance with politicians as actors, or as a military operation with politicians as strategists and generals. Each frame selectively highlights certain aspects of political life and hides others; each orients the reader toward a particular form of participation in it, increasingly moving away, as my data show, from warring metaphors (where active roles for plain people are still conceivable) to metaphors of a theatre and a play (where plain folks are bound to form the audience).

As it turns out, the game of politics resembles sports only superficially. It does not honor strength, speed, strategic thinking, perseverance, and the like. Instead, team loyalty constitutes the main rule and the penalty for breaking that rule is imposed quickly and without fail (*на что она может рассчитывать - почетная ссылка* [what she can count on [is] an honorary exile]). The line of command is clearly defined and ends up at the very top in the hands of the president: *Путин должен дисциплинировать региональных вождей* [Putin has to discipline regional chiefs]. Taken together, these elements point to a close circle of people that play the power game for the nation (*ни один из тех, кто принадлежал к «ближнему кругу» и выпал из него в различных*

обстоятельствах [none of those who belonged to the inner circle and fell out of it under different circumstances]). Discussing these narrow circles, editorials bring in the metaphors of the court and the courtiers, equating presidential candidates with pretenders to the throne (*Путин и Зюганов - основные кандидаты на трон* [Putin and Zyuganov - the main pretenders to the throne]), presidential administration to the courtiers (*самые волнующие моменты в жизни челяди высшего звена* [The most exciting moment in life of servants from top echelons]), powerful political personalities to uncrowned kings (*некоронованные короли российской политики*), new appointees to heirs to the office (*имя наследника Касьянова прозвучит сегодня во второй половине дня* [the name of Kasyanov's heir will be announced today in the afternoon]).

When authorities are viewed as a tight circle of people around the key official in charge, the task of governing falls into the hands of that person instead of being distributed among members of the group. Placed at the steering wheel, that person single-handedly decides on the direction the country is following: *больше шансов оставаться у руля при очередной смене Кабинета* [more changes to remain at the controls during the next change of the Cabinet]; *вернуть себе рычаги быстрого реагирования* [to return oneself the levers of quick responding]; *Режим ручного управления, вынужденно* [Manual operating adopted due to circumstances]. In addition to suggesting that the person in charge carries complete responsibility for the governing/steering decision, these metaphors also evoke the idea of mechanical expertise sufficient for the task of governing (*за годы упорного труда выстроивший работу Кремля с регионами* [during years of hard work, [he] built the relationship of the Kremlin with

regions]) as long as all components, mechanisms, and necessary parts are assembled, oiled, and undergo a regular maintenance check-up. Establishing a functioning government becomes a project that requires some tightening of loosened parts of the state machine or aligning all components to form a new, already infamous, ‘vertical’ of power.

The rhetorical effects of metaphors, frames, scenarios, and similar constructions lie not so much in the labels they provide for elements of the political world (although the power of naming should not be discarded) but in the background information that readers familiar with a frame or a scenario are able to automatically supply to complete the picture. For example, when the frame of a court is triggered, one does not need to draw analogical links between all elements in both conceptual domains. Knowing what courts are and how they operate, readers are easily able to map the political world. Moreover, the analogical mapping takes care of the disturbing parallels between notions: one does not have to disclose the problem element, feature, or process in the political world; they get identified by their functions. An excerpt below illustrates this rhetorical strategy of a meticulous matching between the text-world of *Three Musketeers* and the current political situation, its participants, and its intrigue, effectively assigning President Putin the role of king without specifically naming him:

Вот и Валерия Ильинична Новодворская все никак не может успокоиться. Боярский, говорит Валерия Ильинична, наш российский Д’Артаньян, и тот поддерживает власть. Да это же, говорит Валерия Ильинична, хуже, чем продаться кардиналу.

Это кого же она кардиналом считает? Ну с гвардейцами в штатском - все, думаю, понятно. А вот кто кардинал? И кто, простите, король? И кто же из них хороший, а кто плохой, кто оплот и гарант, а кто тиран и деспот? Сплошные вопросы, вопросы без ответов. Да и с самой Валерией Ильиничной не все ясно. Кто она -

миледи российской политики с клеймом демократии на прекрасном плече, Констанция Бонасье, отравленная газом и нефтью, или королева, у которой украли колье свободных выборов? Не знаю. (Nezavisimaaia Gazeta, 2008, February 12)

[Here is Valeria Illinichna Novodrovskaia, who cannot calm down. Even Boyarky, she says, our Russian d'Artagnan, supports authorities. This, she says, is worse than selling out to the cardinal.

But who does she count as the cardinal? Well, with the guards in plain clothes, everything, I think, is clear. But who is the cardinal? And who, pardon me, is the king? And which one of them is good, and which one is bad, who is the foundation and the defender, and who is the tyrant and the despot? Only questions, questions without answers. But about Valeria Illinichna herself, a lot is unclear. Who is she – Milady of Russian politics with a democracy brand on her beautiful shoulder, Constance Bonacieux, poisoned with gas and oil, or the Queen whose necklace of free elections got stolen? I don't know.]

Elections. Language used in editorial descriptions of elections shows a steady evolution from analogies of wars and military actions in 1996, through metaphors of sports in general and racing in particular in 2000, to metaphors of theatre in 2008.

Excerpts below illustrate each stage respectively: *Ельцин вступил в сражение, казалось, проигранное в самом начале* [eltsin entered the battle that seemed to have been lost from the very beginning]; *кто выбирает между двумя лидерами скачки* [who chooses between two leaders of the races]; *участвовать в организуемом властью спектакле* [to participate in the spectacle organized by the authorities]; *дети хоть что-то получают от этого фарса* [at least children will get something from this farce].

While illuminating certain aspects of the electoral process and campaigning, these metaphors completely obscure or make seemingly unimportant the figure of a voter.

When elections are presented as wars, voters are rarely discussed as the troops or as

civilian casualties. When elections are conceptualized as a game, voters fit only the role of bystanders. When editorialists refer to elections as a show or a theatrical performance, they rarely point out that the performance may lose its potency if the audience of voters fails to show up. And, of course, there is no mention of the ticket-price for the show. In all frames, potential functions of voters are assumed rather than named. Familiarity with the suggested scenario allows readers to place participants properly even though they are not instructed to do so in the text. Encountering descriptions of politics that do have a role specifically reserved for voters may prompt them to form an impression of elections as a game only for the powerful and to adopt the role of passive bystanders, thus enacting a script that fails to place the people in charge.

If voters do not have a role in electoral “wars” or in an electoral “show,” how are they described by editorialists? Previous sections already showed that lay voices have been discontinued, that topic choice rarely includes non-political, social world matters, and that major frames reserve no role for the people. When voters did make an appearance in editorials, they were presented as an aggregate *electorate* that adds ‘weight’ to the position of a candidate and that can be manipulated for that purpose: *Легко понять, с какой силой эта масса может перетянуть ту или иную чашу весов* [It is easy to understand with what weight this mass can pull one or the other measuring plate]; *размагниченность ельцинского электората в последние дни перед выборами* [Yelstin’s electorate is getting less electrified during the last days before the elections]. Yet, these attempts to find a place for the voter (if only by means of analogical reasoning) did not last with editorialists. The year 2000 saw only sporadic mention of

voters, all of which soon disappeared from the editorial horizon. Only the prospect of reactive voting ‘against all’ forces editorialists to discuss voting and voters, although hardly ever in positive (or inspiring) tones: *Норма "против всех" - нечто вроде стоп-крана, применяемого в экстренных обстоятельствах* [The norm “against all” is something like the emergency lever used in the extreme circumstances].

TREND 3: EDITORIALISTS DO NOT REPEAT THE GOVERNMENT’S LINE. .

The overwhelming attention of editorialists to people in power does not translate into open endorsements of politicians or their overall support for policies and actions. Throughout the four electoral seasons under analysis, editorialists maintained a consistently critical slant in their writings. On the whole, they were more likely to be critical than to stay neutral or express support (see Table 5.3), but this central tendency contains some notable exceptions.

First, a critical stance toward authorities is not new. It has always been high. For most years sampled here, it either equaled or prevailed over the neutral tone. Moreover, the highest proportion of critical editorials was published during Putin’s reelection campaign of 2004 - the year when survey reports registered his high approval ratings throughout Russia - and not during what has been described by previous research as years of maximum media freedom under President Yeltsin (Aron 2007). Only recently did editorialists start lowering their voices and offer neutral commentaries.

Second, parallel to this development, the supportive attitude toward authorities dropped in 2008 (7.41%) after being consistently on the rise in the preceding years. This finding is remarkable on two grounds: first, it reveals that both praise and blame of

authorities fluctuate in accord with one another; and second, it draws attention to co-existing criticisms of authorities and of ordinary people. One possible explanation of such a configuration of praising and blaming comments is its connection to the pattern discussed earlier: editorialists are more interested in what people in power do, regardless of how their actions are eventually evaluated.

Table 5.3

Editorials' Slant across Time (%)

	CRITICAL		NEUTRAL	SUPPORTIVE	
	Authorities	People		Authorities	People
1996	41.79	13.43	32.84	10.45	1.49
2000	40.91	2.27	40.91	11.36	4.55
2004	44.68	4.26	36.17	14.89	0.00
2008	31.48	9.26	50.00	7.41	1.85
TOTAL	39.62	8.02	39.62	10.85	1.89

A third trend is the growing proportion of critical statements aimed at people: after dropping from its heights of 13.42% in 1996 and giving in to supportive comments in 2000 (4.55%), criticism has been gradually gaining in volume. Editorialists tend to choose the negative tone toward ordinary folks more often, leaving the positive attitude practically inapplicable to this group. Does it reflect disappointment of the Russian editors with ordinary people? Do those remarks indicate steady contempt of the elites toward the masses? Have the newspapers stopped being the people's advocates, the role that they had proudly claimed to perform until recently? I suggest that the answer to these questions is yes. Editorials (either deliberately or reluctantly) reveal their political

standing: they part ways with the people because real political power in Russia does not rest in people's hands, but they also stay critical of the powerful because the media are excluded from the political club they so closely watch.

Textual examples below provide deeper insight into the treatment of the two groups: ordinary people and public officials. The first pair of excerpts comes from editorials published in *Ogonyok* in 1996:

*Ведь нынче каждый второй -- борец за свои права и против чужих, каждый третий хоть чем-то, да поуправлял, почти все научились носить костюм и пользоваться носовым платком. А уж говорунов-то, говорунов... Да и по старой российской традиции куда легче объяснить, почему ты против. Всех и всего. (*Ogonyok*, 1996, June 10)*

[Now every other one is a fighter for his right and against others', every third one has ruled over something, regardless what, almost everyone learnt to wear a costume and use a handkerchief. And the talkers, the talkers... Well, according to the old Russian tradition, it's way too easy to explain why you are against everyone. Everyone and everything.]

*Победа Ельцина на выборах в России стала триумфом демократии. Цитата из Клинтона. Ну он далеко, ему можно. Здесь, правда, и у самых восторженных сторонников президента язык не повернулся, чтобы так уж, прямо... (*Ogonyok*, 1996, July 15)*

[Yeltsin's electoral victory became a triumph of Russian democracy. A quote from Clinton. Well, he is far away, he can be excused. Here, to tell the truth, even the most excited Yeltsin's supporters would not put it so directly...]

The following excerpts from 2004 published in *Ogonyok* and *Izvestiia* respectively demonstrate a split between supportive and critical remarks aimed at the President:

На прошлой неделе президент России Владимир Путин получил мандат кандидата в президенты Российской Федерации. Это событие, на мой взгляд, должно было взволновать рядового избирателя. Но, увы, жизнь показывает, что нашего избирателя все труднее чем-нибудь взволновать. [...]

Четыре года назад он не поленился приехать в Центризбирком за таким же удостоверением. Да, тогда ему все было в новинку. Он до этого, может, и в Центризбиркоме-то никогда не был. Получить мандат, поплыть на подлодке, взлететь на истребителе -- все это, смею утверждать, были звенья одной цепи. Сейчас президент не плавает на подлодках и не ездит в ЦИК за удостоверением кандидата в президенты. (Огопуок, 2004, March 13)

[Last week president Putin received his ID as a presidential candidate of the Russian Federation. This event, I think should have disturbed an ordinary voter. But, alas, the reality shows that our voters are getting more and more difficult to disturb. [...]

Four year ago he did not feel too lazy to come to the Central Electoral Committee for a similar ID. Well, back then everything was new to him. Maybe he had not been to the central Electoral Committee before. To get and ID, to get a ride on a submarine or a attacker aircraft – all that, I assure you, were the links of the same chain. Now, the president does not ride submarines nor go to the CEC for presidential candidate ID.]

Из состояния хаоса и произвола невозможно перейти к цветущей либеральной демократии. Из хаоса и произвола можно подняться только к полицейскому государству в той или иной форме. Главная проблема как раз - вылететь "полицейского". Единственный инструмент, сохранившийся у государства в борьбе с олигархией, - право на легальную репрессию. Самая характерная черта путинского пути к установлению порядка - принцип минимальной достаточности репрессии (то, что некоторые называют "избирательным применением правосудия"). Представьте себе неизбирательное! (Izvestiia, 2004, March 3)

[From the state of chaos and lawlessness it is impossible to move to blowing liberal democracy. From chaos and lawlessness it is possible to rise only to a police state in some shape or another. The only instrument preserved by the government in the battle with oligarchy is the right to legal repression. The most typical feature of Putin's way to installing order [is] the principle of minimally sufficient repression (that some call a 'selective use of the legal system'). Imagine a non-selective!]

In 2008, *Izvestiia's* editorials clearly backed the government and cut short any attempt at alternative argument or even doubt about the official version of reality. The paragraph below demonstrates:

Даже самые непримиримые критики Владимира Путина признают, что он пользуется огромной поддержкой сограждан. Граждане России трижды вручали ему мандат на власть - в 2000 и 2004 гг. на выборах президента и в 2007 г. - на думских выборах, ставших "референдумом о доверии Путину". Этот "референдум" также санкционировал его право выдвинуть преемника на президентском посту. Все выборы были прямыми, равными и свободными, проводились в положенные сроки. Дмитрий Медведев избирается в аналогичных условиях. В этой связи никакой дискуссии о демократичности российской власти не может быть по определению (Izvestiia, 2008, February 11)

[Even the staunchest critics of Vladimir Putin accept that he enjoys the enormous support of fellow citizens. Russian citizens gave a mandate to power three times – in 2000 and 2004 during the presidential elections and in 2007 – during the Duma’s elections, which became a referendum of trust in Putin. This ‘referendum’ also sanctions his right to nominate an heir to the presidential post. All elections were direct, equal and free, and occurred at a required time. Dmitry Medvedev is being elected in a similar situation. In this respect, no discussion about democratic character of Russian power cannot occur by definition.]

Table 5.4

Editorials’ Slant by Publication

	OBJECT	AUTHORITIES			PEOPLE	
	SLANT	Critical	Supportive	Neutral	Supportive	Critical
<i>Izvestiia</i>	n=75	16	15	36	1	7
	%	21.33	20.00	48.00	1.33	9.33
<i>Nezavisimaia</i>	n=75	46	3	24	0	2
	%	61.33	4.00	32.00	0.00	2.67
<i>Ogonyok</i>	n=62	22	5	24	3	8
	%	35.48	8.06	38.71	4.84	12.90
TOTAL	N=212	84	23	84	4	17
	%	39.62	10.85	39.62	1.89	8.02

A split in my sample between newspapers that express constant criticism of authorities and those that have shifted toward a more supportive one, helps explain the composition of critical voices among editorialists. Even though publications selected for this study represent the Russian mainstream press, the tone of their editorials reveals their pedigree and resonates with their particular brand of journalism. None of the papers supports extreme political positions or openly mobilizes their readers for a political course. They all publish neutral editorials from time to time (see Table 5.4). But their expressions of support and criticism tell a lot about their standing within political circles.

Izvestiia is the only newspaper in my corpus that has regularly published supportive editorials. At times, the supportive remarks were more numerous (as in 1996) and outnumbered critical editorials. At other times, they were divided almost evenly (as in 2000 and 2008) between criticism and approval. But there has not been an election season when *Izvestiia*'s editorialists resorted only to neutral or critical remarks. This consistency in tone can be explained by the persistent reputation of *Izvestiia* as the newspaper of the establishment that goes back to the times when it was the official publication of the Soviet government. Even though the new *Izvestiia* recast its image and won new readership, the tradition of establishment journalism (that is, journalism loyal to authorities) continues.

Unlike renowned *Izvestiia*, *Nezavisimaiia Gazeta* was established in the 1990s as an alternative to the official press. Its share of critical editorials in my corpus is extraordinary high (over 50%) for all years sampled, despite several changes of hands and new faces on the editorial board. It is also the only publication that publishes two

types of editorials: one titled “From the Editors’ Office” which appears on the second page and the other, written by the editor-in-chief himself, which is placed on the front page and adopts an ironic attitude.

The volatile profile of *Ogonyok*’s editorials, puzzling at first, can be linked directly to organizational changes and issues of ownership that affected the publication. Although its editors never led the publication through an election during which *Ogonyok* would abstain from criticism of the ruling elites, in 2000 *Ogonyok* replaced its traditional editor’s column on the front page with a photo gallery titled ‘The Mood of the Week.’ A short paragraph that accompanied the pictures was stripped of any political stance: it was there to set the mood – not the argument – of the week. The reason for the change was probably an attempt by *Ogonyok*’s new owners to transform it into a publication for the new and emerging wealthy class. Not without the help from its readers (for which letters to the editors give abundant evidence), the staff eventually won the battle and returned to their time-honored brand of journalism that has kept their readers loyal to *Ogonyok* for generations. But what kind of reader do critical editorialists envision? And what does s/he expect of the reader? The next section will explore these questions in greater detail.

TREND 4: EDITORIALISTS HAVE BECOME INTERACTIVE AND CONVERSATIONAL.

In a newspaper, feedback from readers takes many forms: letters to the editor, calls to the editorial office, subscription and sales -- all speak to the resonance publications find with an audience. For journalists, the choice of channels of communication is often limited to the text itself, but each text opens a number of

communicative possibilities that may offset the distance between the writer and the reader. Individual genres practiced by newspapers – news reports, cover stories, news briefs, analytical articles, classified sections, announcements, and others – structure relations between the reader and the writer that follow the conventions of those genres. For example, readers of a news report are not expected to reconstruct the reporter’s ideological position, but to pay attention to the accuracy, balance, and timeliness of the news item. Readers of the cover story are expected to be less concerned with recent events and to concentrate on the moral of the story and the lesson it teaches. In turn, readers of the newspaper’s editorials are expected to be interested in an overall evaluation of major events. Editorial texts provide abundant evidence of the image of the reader the newspaper hopes to attract. Understandably, this imagined readership might differ somewhat from actual consumers of editorials.

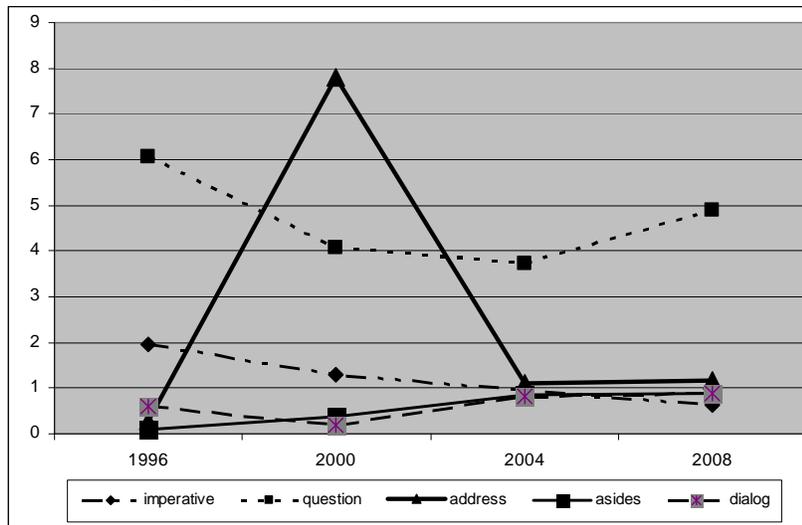
Regardless of the adequacy of the readers’ image in the editorialist’s mind, an interaction with them is not imaginary. Editorialists actively engage their readers by asking questions, addressing them directly (although mostly by generic names), responding to projected comments from them, and by keeping their attention via a variety of means. Over time, editorialists’ efforts to connect with the reader have grown *less demanding*, *agitating*, or *imperative*, *more conversational*, and better adapted to *an inquisitive audience* that would appreciate probing questions instead of summative judgments.

As displayed in Figure 5.1, within 12 years, four out of five indicators of the reader/writer interaction stabilized at about the same level. By the year 2008,

imperatives, direct address, imagined dialogue, and meta-textual markers (labeled ‘asides’ in the legend) appear approximately with the same frequency. Imagined conversations have become a reliable device that editorialists employ to connect with the reader but dialogue has not been adopted as a structural principle shaping the text. Nowadays, as the diminishing utility of imperatives testifies, editorials are less likely to urge readers to take actions or rally them behind a political group or a certain course of action.

Figure 5.1

Means of Readers’ Engagement over Time



When they are resorted to, imperatives are often employed in such a way as to dissolve an action instead of spurring it on. A paragraph below illustrates this practice of discursively arresting rather than igniting protests on political grounds:

Твоя жажда свободы натывается на свободы окружающих, и все существуют в таком весьма ограниченном пространстве личных свобод, как в пчелиных сотах. Вот тебе и вся свобода, глупый человек. Над тобой -- Бог в Природе, вокруг тебя -- общество, организованное в

государство, а внутри тебя -- совесть, взывающая к законам морали и справедливости. Так молчи, раб! Благодарю за безопасность, баран! (Ogonyok, 2004, April 4)

[Your thirst for freedom bumps into freedoms of those around, and everyone exists in this, pretty restricted space of personal freedoms, like in bee-combs. Here is all your freedom, silly man. Above you – God in Nature, around you – society, organized in a state, and inside you – conscience calling to laws of morality and justice. So, keep silent, slave! Be thankful for security, stupid]

A sudden peak of direct address for year 2000 (see Figure 5.1) likely occurred due to a group of *Ogonyok's* editorials that called on 13 presidential hopefuls on the eve of the election day. In a mischievous move, the editorial office decided ‘not to waste,’ as the story goes, canned remarks prepared to welcome a new president and congratulate him or her on the victory. Instead, they published all 13 texts, written to match in number the list of candidates on the ballot including the option ‘against all.’ The presence of these texts resulted in a soaring number of distant addresses registered that year. Their origin, however, suggests that they be treated as outliers.

A more conversational tone of editorials emerges out of a combination of strategies: an imagined dialogue with the readers, navigating him/her through the text by meta-textual signposts, and the use of colloquial forms. For example:

Предположу меж тем, что событие это в скором времени канет в Лету и дело тихо сойдет на нет. Отчего такие подозрения? Да уж очень знакома схема, по которой силовые органы, а порой и прокуратура используются высшими эшелонами власти для решения неких кадровых проблем. Категории же права и законности при этом начинают выглядеть совершенно абстрактными. Вы просите примеров? Их есть, и в достатке. (Ogonyok, 1996, June 3)

[Meanwhile, [I] will make a suggestion that this event will soon drop into the Lethe and the case will quietly die down. Why such suspicions? Well, too famous is the scheme according to which the security agencies, and at time the prosecutors' office, are used by the top echelons for solving some staffing problems. With that categories of law and lawfulness start looking absolutely abstract. You are asking for example? Them are quite enough.]

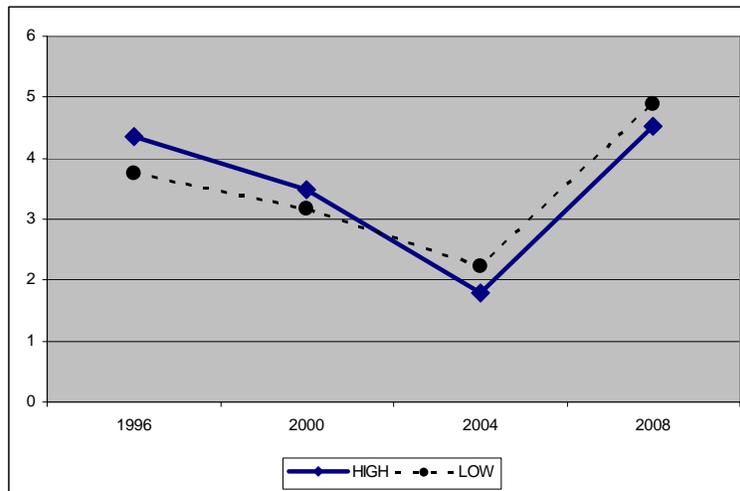
The presence of the conversational formulas and dialogical interactive patterns in editorials demonstrate that they have undergone a significant transformation since the Soviet time when editorialists were bound by the newspaper's mission to serve as "propagandists, agitators, and organizers." Now, they criticize rather than amplify the official version of events. To form an opinion, they call upon the critical faculty of their readers rather than on their class-based instincts. Editorialists envision a reader brave enough to disagree instead of one who is ready to offer instant and unconditional support. But are they becoming more accessible to readers of all walks of life? By some accounts, the seriousness of the Soviet press put it "beyond the range of the common readers" (Brooks 1989, p. 16). The interactive features of editorials described above were an improvement over the grave tone and seriousness. But interactivity does not exhaust all means of making the editorial text approachable. To a large extent, the vocabulary used by editorialists contributes to creating or dismantling the barriers between the paper and its reader.

As shown in Figure 5.2, in 1996 the proportion of high-style vocabulary, learned phrases and clichés in editorials, was larger than that of colloquial language and pedestrian expressions. The situation changed in 2004 when vernacular inclusions took an upper-hand over high-style elements. It is notable, however, that until then both styles

were declining, making room for neutral expressions that make up the bulk of editorial language. The year 2008 saw a sudden jump: not only did low-style vocabulary re-affirm its prevalence over high style, but both strands become twice as visible in the texts.

Figure 5.2

High versus Low Vocabulary over Time (%)



That Russian editorials preserve high-style expressions despite their embrace of colloquial expressions and low-key conversational presentations comes as slightly counterintuitive. A hint toward a possible explanation of this symbiotic relationship may lie in the sarcastic tone of many editorials: editorialists use high-flown language primarily to make fun of it. An example from *Nezavisimaaia Gazeta* illustrates such juggling with formulaic expressions:

Щупальца безнравственности одолевают наше отечество, не дают бодро и гордо выполнять национальные проекты, в том числе и демографические. Единая и справедливая Россия в опасности, враг у ворот, дадим отпор извращенцам и гегельяцам всех мастей. Прочь из наших сердец сумбур вместо музыки. К чему я это? (Nezavisimaaia Gazeta, 2008, February 1)

[Tentacles of immorality are overpowering our Fatherland, preventing us from proudly and energetically implementing national projects, including demographic ones. United and just Russia is in danger, the enemy is at the gate, let's resist the perverts and Hegelians of all stripes. Out from our hearts cacophony instead of music. Where was I?]

An increased use of humorous language was first reported in the 1990s when newspapers, according to some observers, “rushed into irony headlong.” “Never before was irony found on the first – official - page, but now it settled even there,” pointed out Zemskaja (1996, p. 159). Even serious, analytical papers with a long-standing reputation of quality publications (like *Izvestiia*) were inclined toward excessive irony and subjective accounts. The tendency, in Zemskaja’s words, was “pandemic” as it became “impossible” to find an article whose author would stay away from stylistic innovations even when covering serious matters (p.156)

Editorials in *Nezavisimaiia Gazeta* are particularly playful, although their playfulness presupposes a significant amount of knowledge on the part of the reader. Humor in editorials is an intellectual game, so to speak. The excerpt below, for instance, quotes in passing a line from a poem, mentions the poet’s family relations, and crowns the passage with a cliché from the Soviet times, all while creatively mixing high and low styles and almost breaking normative grammar:

*Я не говорю о том, что массовый избиратель не читал ни программы Б.Н., ни программы А.И. ("золотого, как небо, АИ", выразился бы зять Менделеева), а следовательно, оценить, кто что куда влил, не сможет. Но вот сколько влил - это ухватывается подсознанием даже менее образованного, чем я, выпускника советской средней школы (лучшей в мире). (*Nezavisimaiia Gazeta*, 1996, June 26)*

[I am not mentioning the fact that the mass voter did not read either the program of B.N not the program of A.I. (“golden as the heaven ai” could have said Mendeleeev’s son-in-law), and as a consequence cannot estimate who mixed what with what. But how much was mixed in - this can be unconsciously grasped even by less educated than myself a graduate of the soviet high school (the best in the world)]

Examples of elitist wordplay are far from isolated or confined to *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*.

On the contrary, editorialists routinely weave references to characters from literary masterpieces, allude to historical events, and cite famous (and less so) figures. An example below illustrates this practice of creating a mosaic text by combining a quote from the Constitution, a quote from a 15th century monk, and a nationalistic slogan worked out by the Russian minister of education of the early 19th century:

Вряд ли кто-нибудь из двухсот представителей российской интеллектуальной элиты, успешно потрудившихся на предвыборной ниве Б.Н.Ельцина, вспомнил в этот момент статью 13 Конституции РФ: "В Российской Федерации признается идеологическое многообразие. Никакая идеология не может устанавливаться в качестве государственной или обязательной". Тем более, за давностью времен трудно было припомнить письмо инока Филофея Ивану III: "Два Рима пали, а третий стоит, а четвертому не быть." Или уваровские "Православие. Самодержавие. Народность". (Izvestiia, 1996, July 17)

[Hardly anyone of the two hundred representatives of the Russian intellectual elite, having productively worked in the field of Yeltsin’s electoral campaign, recalled at that moment Article 13 of the Constitution of RF: “The Russian Federation upholds ideological diversity. No ideology can be established as a state or an obligatory one.” Even harder was it to recall a letter to Ivan III by monk Filofei: “Two Romes fell, the third stands, and the fourth there will never be.” Or Uvarovian “Orthodoxy. Monarchy. Popularity.”]

These observations come in a sharp contrast to numerous accounts of the media’s spoiling (or even ruining) of the Russian language (Kolesov, 2003). In the early 1990s,

when changes in the language of the press caught public attention, they were not uniformly seen as positive nor were they always welcomed. While some scholars interpreted changes as a consequence of the democratization of literary norms (Mokienko, 1999, p. 82) and an overall de-sovietization of public language (Cobb 2002), others saw them as signs of the growing unprofessionalism of the press, a deviation, contamination, or even damage to the Russian language in general (Grabelnikov, 1996, p. 123). At times, a parallel was drawn between de-sovietization and damage to the traditions. Acknowledging the move away from Soviet clichés, Cobb pointed out that stylistic liberation feeds on the “substandard elements and various forms of slang” (p.22), leading to “vulgarization” of the literary norm.

My data, however, support a different conclusion. When it comes to editorials, the occurrences of stylistically marked vocabulary never reached 5% of the clauses (be it officialese or jargon). During the time when language purists sounded the alarm, editorialists were consistently employing neutral, unmarked vocabulary. In other words, the alarm went off prematurely, at least for the mainstream newspapers. The reports of the language ruin largely underestimated the perseverance of the high style.

But Russian scholars did spot an important trend. Back in the 1990s, criticism, irony, and vernacular expressions won the newspapers their subscription numbers (Mickewich 2000, p. 96). Whether the growing elitism will keep those numbers high remains to be seen. Disputes about language purity have not been reconciled and continue entertaining arguments about media’s spoils of great traditions (Kolesov 2003). Rarely is

the influx of vernacular expressions in the press viewed positively or linked to the growth of freedom.

DISCUSSION

What does the presence of these trends mean for the prospects of democracy in Russia?

Overall, editorials remain heavily political, keeping up with the tradition of the genre that has always been loaded with political meaning. Is its mission different now from what it was in the Soviet times? If so, in what way? And how have the genre's features adjusted to assist editorialists fulfil their mission?

The early and mid-1990s, sometimes looked upon as the golden age of Russian freedom of the press, produced a press that was 'free' at the level of "proprietary independence" (Murray, 1999, p. 28-29) but failed to represent anything like a plurality of opinion. Even in those golden years, what the press offered was "the pluralism of the positions of financial and business clans" (ibid). During that time, *Nezavisimaii Gazeta* was founded on a mission to provide "resistance to the ossified Soviet journalistic style" (Zassoursky, 2004, p.37). In the words of its former editor, Vitaly Tretjakov, his publication followed principles that were in stark contrast to the idea of the fourth estate. His newspaper did not want to be marred by any association with the government. "Independence merely from the official authorities is not independence at all, but merely an oppositional stance. Real independence is independence from the opposition as well," he declared (ibid). *Nezavisimaiia* pursued full information, free commentary, presentation of different perspectives in one newspaper, and, of course, despised a unified, corporate opinion expressed in editorials. According to Tretjakov, the newspaper was "to present

first and foremost the view of eyewitnesses and experts. In any but exceptional cases, however, it should not declare that there is any common view shared by the editorial staff as a whole” (cited in Zassoursky, p.38).

A decade of being a Russian instead of a Soviet press has left its mark on newspaper editorials. Gone are the flat style and obligatory ideological quotes. Increasingly accepted are voices from many political and cultural authorities. Gone are repetitions and agitation. Included are irony and criticism. Editorialists are outspoken and compel the reader to pay attention to the point being made, but the genre may be poorly equipped to promote a true exchange of opinion. In editorial journalism, debate is out of place, for only one position - critical and somewhat cynical - is heard and, one may say, accepted. Little wonder, then, that theirs is the voice of a party that has not been invited to sit at the table of institutional politics. Their role of permanent opposition to authorities may have found some success with readers but it has not won newspapers political allies.

The gloomy picture provided by Freedom House, which in April 2002 pronounced that “the Russian public lost access to diverse news and opinions,” may well be exaggerated (Karlerkar, Sussman, Koven, & Dine, 2003, 43). There exists a fair amount of diversity in the press, I find. Editorialists can be sharply critical of the president. Freedom of expression “has not been gagged” (Brown, 2001), and as Sutela and Rautava (2000) put it, “there would be no political lie which Moscow newspapers would not reveal” (cited in Pietitainen, 2002). However, more alarming than reports about the vanished pluralism of the press is the fact that since the time of the nation’s independence in 1991, the Russian public has rarely been asked, helped, or encouraged to

become democratic. During the glasnost era, journalists viewed themselves as “missionaries” but, unfortunately, understood press freedom primarily as “the freedom to express subjective convictions publicly” (Vltmer, 2000, p. 479) rather than the freedom to serve the public interest and satisfy the information needs of a public posed to become truly democratic.

CHAPTER SIX

FROM SUBJECTS INTO CITIZENS

“Show me the unedited letters from your readers and I will know all about your publication,” declared Vitaly Tretjakov (2004), a former editor-in-chief of *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*. “A reader is naïve and spontaneous, a journalist is cynical and pragmatic” (p.274), continued the statement. That is why it is impossible to imitate a letter so well that the trained eye of a professional spots no fakeness. Unfortunately, admitted Tretjakov, letters, already a secondary genre (although a very special one), are being squeezed out of Russian newspapers, their standing being undermined by a factor more ‘cynical,’ in his judgment, than a mere advancement of technology. Editorial staff, shared Tretjakov, does not respect the opinion of the reader, and journalists are unwilling to give up print space that they could use for their own materials (p.273). So far, letters have not vanished into oblivion, but how long will they last if the trend intensifies? What will motivate editors to make room for lay voices? What purpose must a genre serve to secure its presence in newspapers? What will change if letters discontinue?

To understand the future of the genre, one has to look at its politics. Not long ago, when the Soviet media were among the central means of governing the Soviet citizen, editorials were vested with the task of propagating the official ideology, and letters to the editors (mostly unpublished) served to gauge a level of loyalty to the regime among the public. After twenty years of political change, the newspapers have adapted to new conditions. But have they transformed radically enough to un-freeze the Soviet subject? Has the new Russian public abandoned its Soviet cocoon?

To gain insight into these matters, I approach my texts via a metaphor of interpellation that has been coined by Louis Althusser (1972) in his work on ideology. In a famous ‘formulation,’ Althusser posited that “all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects” (p.173) and that a constant practice of ideological rituals allows subjects to exist as “distinguished and (naturally) irreplaceable” (p.172-173). An Althusserian notion of interpellation was instrumental in shedding light on the discursive success of Thatcherism in creating new subject positions - the consumer, the taxpayer, the British people – that individuals were subsequently encouraged to adopt. And to the extent that people accepted those images as accurate representations of themselves, Thatcherite discourse won (Phillips, 1998, p.852).

Applied to newspaper discourse, the metaphor of interpellation links editorials and letters to the editor in an unambiguous way, assigning the former the function of a ‘call’ and the latter – that of a ‘response’ since letter-writers are members of a larger audience being addressed. The application, admittedly, has a number of limitations: it assumes a unilateral relation between editorials (the call) and letters (the response) and overlooks the possibility of competing calls and multiple responses. It also assumes that a response from readers is genuine and spontaneous, leaving aside the involvement of editors in selecting and preparing letters for publication and, in doing so, constructing the response. Yet the explanatory potential of the interpellation frame connecting the features and strategies used in editorials with qualities of letters as parts of a larger ideological project offsets these limitations. It makes it possible to go beyond the boundary of a single text

and explore how the rhetorical effects of texts in different genres coordinate within a newspaper and help orient the reading public in many of its social roles.

To understand co-existence and joint-performance of letters to the editor and editorials within the space of contemporary Russian newspapers, I ask the following questions: (1) What features of editorials support or obstruct their functioning as a call upon the audience? (2) What features of letters support or obstruct their functioning as the response of an interpellated subject? (3) What other social actions are performed via these two genres? (4) What do the two genres reveal about public conversation in Russia?

Juxtaposing editorials and letters to the editor, my analysis finds a considerable discrepancy between them: letter-writers come across as more politically advanced than those members of the public to whom editorials direct their ‘call,’ an audience that is unlikely to pick up a pen to send a letter to the editor. Conflicting properties of the ‘call’ disorient the prospective audience and discourage activism in public life. Thus, an emerging democratic subject, vocal on the letters’ page, is led to a political standstill by the most ideological piece in a newspaper – its editorial. But how is this ‘tranquilization’ accomplished? Comparing rhetorical features of the two genres, mapping out their linguistic choices, aligning the properties of ‘the call’ with those of ‘the response,’ I have found three lines of misdirected interpellation:

- (1) Editorials bypass the audience of letter-writers;
- (2) Editorialists’ agendas do not match concerns voiced in letters;
- (3) Extreme use of humor undermines editorials’ mobilization potential.

Together, these observations support a conclusion that in the public realm, ordinary Russians are rarely called upon as democratic subjects; therefore, they rarely identify with democrats or as democrats. In what follows, I will outline my findings in more detail and will discuss the implications of these discursive practices for the prospect of democracy in Russia.

BYPASSING THE AUDIENCE

Summarizing his observations on the role of everyday language in the British press, Michael Billig (1995) noted that ‘small words’ like pronouns and catch-phrases assist in reproduction of established nations, constantly reminding people of their nationhood in mundane and unspectacular ways. For instance, the first person plural *we* hints at an existing line between those who belong and those who don’t. Of course, as Brookes (1999) points out, “It would be wrong to suggest that whenever the words *we* or *us* are used in newspaper editorials it is the nation that is being automatically denoted” (p. 255). The scope of *we* changes from one situation to another depending on the goal the speaker pursues and the rhetorical effect s/he hopes to produce. Such contingency makes pronouns one the most useful tools of persuasion in political communication as well as objects of primary attention for students of what Billig called ‘banal nationalism.’

Tracing the ‘small words’ of personal deixis in my texts, I found editorial ‘calls’ bypassing the audience of letter-writers and evoking, instead, a group whose qualities do not quite match the self-descriptions of letter-writers but that do resemble the editorialists themselves. This self-centeredness, noticeable on the individual level (references to *me*), becomes even more obvious on the level of collective entities (*we*

and *they*). Consider the following excerpts. Editorials, commenting on voting behavior, remark - somewhat gleefully – on the casual attitudes of Russians toward elections and politics:

Нам, россиянам, без конца и края только дай повеселиться. Обязательно бы выбрали. Никуда бы он не делся, стал бы президентом. (*Ogonyok*, 2004, April 24)

[We Russians are only waiting for a pretext to have fun. [We] would have elected him by all means. There wouldn't be any escape for him but to become president.]

Наша страна выстрадала спокойную жизнь и по большому счету перестала интересоваться политикой: были бы свобода в жизни частной и возможность по нарастающей зарабатывать. (*Izvestiia*, 2008, March 6)

[Our country has suffered enough to have a quiet life and to a large extent [it] has quit being interested in politics: if only we had freedom in private life and an opportunity to earn increasingly more.]

In comparison, a letter to the editor sees the negligent and descriptive behavior of fellow citizens as a cause of concern:

*Я еще молодой, так объясните: чем мне гордиться? Природой, которую испоганили? Искусством, которое разворовали? Народом, который, не поняв Сахарова и доведя до гроба Собчака, голосует за Зюганова? Бритыми пацанами со свастиками на Невском проспекте? Ответы очень нужны, потому что теряю я веру в Россию. (*Ogonyok*, 2000, March 27)*

[I am young, so could [anyone] explain to me what to be proud of? The natural beauty that has been ruined? The art that has been smuggled out? The people who having understood neither Sobchak nor Sakharov now vote for Zyuganov? Skinheads in swastikas on Nevsky Avenue? Answers are very much needed because I am losing my faith in Russia.]

The contrast between the two excerpts is hard to miss. One is the voice of the elites, the other comes from a person who knows what life looks like at the street level. The former is amused by what appears to be national attitudes toward politics. The latter is worried about them. The vision of the people articulated in one genre is challenged by the other. These differences, as I will show in this chapter, expose an opening cleavage between the two groups and contribute to their talking past each other. Evidence of poor resonance of the editorial ‘call’ among letter-writers comes from several sources: (a) distancing between the groups; (b) a mismatch in audience perceptions; (c) diverging understanding of collective identities; and (d) a divide in ‘negative’ identification (*we* vs *them*) in the two genres. Below, I will detail the dimensions of faltering interpellation and elaborate on the implications this development has for political communication between elites and masses, particularly for the task of political persuasion and mobilization.

The ratio of personal pronouns (*you, we, they, he/she/it*) to the deictic center (*I*) has been used by previous research on political language as an indicator of social distance (Anderson 1996, 1997)⁵. In my texts, *distancing affect both genres but not to the same degree* (see Table 1). Additionally, an unsophisticated ratio test uncovers two puzzles: the persistent distancing from *them* in letters and the unusual route

⁵ Anderson (1999) operationalized social distance as a composite of three linguistic features: the length of clauses (the ratio of nouns to verbs), expressions of difference (the ratio of conjunctions as well as forms of negation), and the distance from the deictic center (the ratio of personal pronouns to the first person and the ratio of possessive to personal pronouns). He reports significant reduction in social distance along all three dimensions (p.151). For my purposes here, however, I discuss only his findings regarding personal deixis.

distancing takes in editorials starting, most unexpectedly, with the group close to home (*you*) instead of an outside group (*them*).

Editorials exhibit a steadily growing distance among all groups of actors, with the year 2000 being a turning point after which distancing, earlier identifiable between *you* and *I*, catches up across the board and continues to grow. By 2008, the ratio of *we* to *I* in editorials almost quadruples in comparison to its score in the preceding year. At the same time, language in letters to the editor shows a different dynamic. The distance between *we* and *I* has been shortening until 2008, when it experienced a sudden turn to the reverse. On the other hand, throughout the time period I examined, *they* and *I* have been seen as increasingly parting company.

Table 6.1
Ratio of Personal Pronouns to First Person Singular in Two Genres

	YOU		S/HE/IT		WE		THEY	
	LET	ED	LET	ED	LET	ED	LET	ED
1996	0.02	0.68	0.11	0.45	0.81	4.82	0.33	4.18
2000	0.05	1.11	0.08	0.17	0.62	2.72	0.38	2.17
2004	0.02	5.38	0.21	0.38	0.51	7.75	0.63	2.25
2008	0.08	5.00	0.19	1.67	1.04	28.67	0.78	7.33

These developments present a picture of Russian public discourse that contradicts Anderson's findings from the early years of perestroika. At that time, his studies of personal deixis in speeches by the Soviet and Russian leaders found evidence of significant change among deictic expressions in the three periods he explored: authoritarian (until March 1985), transitional (until the end of 1989), and electoral

(since 1990), leading him to conclude that “persons are more likely to be agents of politics and less likely to be attributes of impersonal projects. Speakers are more likely to present themselves as numerically equal to the listener or reader and more likely to present politics as something a person does rather than views” (p.160). Electoral Russian was thus pronounced to “instantiate” the language that is “most effective for democratic politicians” (ibid).

According to Anderson’s discursive theory of democratization, my findings on personal deixis should be enough to diagnose contemporary political Russian with a case of creeping authoritarianism. But a critical look at the textual evidence suggests that the case is not so clear cut. For instance, an increase of *you* that produces a larger ratio and can, consequently, be taken as an indicator of growing social distance may reflect increasing interactivity among the participants, connecting them with each other rather than pushing them apart. That is, texts that engage readers by asking questions or acting out imagined dialogues with them (as many editorialists in my sample do) will score higher on the *you* to *I* ratio than texts designed to convey information to the audience. Also, Anderson’s data come from spoken discourse. Written language, lacking immediate contact with an interlocutor, could contribute to the distancing observed. In addition, a focus on *I* in political Russian might signal a shift toward a more personalized politics and not a move to a “numerically equal” presentation of the speaker/author, as Anderson posited. Furthermore, gravitation toward a deictic center (that is, the *I* of the utterance) might indicate the demise of collectivist attitudes, group interests, and the aggressive

promotion of individualism. Together these possibilities suggest that the pervasiveness of distancing in editorials and a puzzling presence of it in letters may be strategic. The remaining part of this section will unpack several tactical moves that contribute to the overall strategy of distancing.

Images of readers entertained by editorialists do not match the self-descriptions of letter-writers. A quick look at the roster of social roles in which writers in both genres present themselves assures us of a certain level of congruence between the interests of editorialists and those of letter-writers, but a deeper inquiry does not find much camaraderie between them. Indeed, both tend to emphasize their status as private individuals, indicate their professional and/or occupational identity, their rights as citizens, and their connections to the newspaper (see Table 6.2).

Table 6.2

Top Semantic Roles of Personal Pronouns (%)

Rank*	LETTERS				EDITORIALS			
	ME (n=761)		WE (n=550)		ME (n=51)		YOU (n=93)	
1	individual	35.35	Russian	25.09	individual	45.10	ordinary	25.81
2	reader	15.77	ordinary	14.00	reader	15.69	individual	22.58
3	professional	8.80	professional	8.18	ordinary	13.73	reader	13.98
4	citizen	5.39	resident	7.64	expert	11.76	group rep	8.60
5	family member	5.26	family member	7.45	citizen	5.88	expert	6.45

Note: Entries for *you* in editorials combine both singular and plural entities.

* The tabulated data are limited to categories above the 5% cut-off point.

An editorialist sharing his thoughts regarding newspaper materials (*Не так давно я прочитал в газете «Известия» потрясающую меня заметку* [Not so long ago I read in

Izvestiia a shocking story]) is echoed by a reader contemplating another publication (*Очень я задумался над статьей Дм. Быкова «Двор жалко». О российских нравах -- нахамить, избить, изуродовать.* [I have been giving some serious thought to Dm. Bykov's article "Pity for the Yard." About Russian customs – to rudely cut off, to beat up, to maim]).

The similarity, unfortunately, does not go much further and the differences in self-identification become evident with the third entry on their lists. Surprisingly, it is editorialists, not the letter-writers, who rank their ordinariness (13.73%) above their professional status and expert knowledge (11.76%).

The example below comes from an editorialist who, when commenting on a campaign commercial, offers no critical remarks on the content of the piece or on its effects on the target audience but who poses as an ordinary viewer curious about details of the president's daily routine:

Мне было интересно узнать про внука, про то, как именно весело Борис Николаевич жил в студенческие годы, какие газеты читает, и почему ему не докладывают, что анекдоты про него, хотя и редко, но все же сочиняют (это Брежневу бы бояться таких докладов, - ни на что другое тогда бы времени не хватило) (Nezavisimaia Gazeta, 1996, June 15)

[I was curious to hear about the grandson, about how exactly Boris Nikolaevich spent his merry student years, about newspapers he reads, and why he is not informed that jokes about him are told, although rarely (Brezhnev would have feared such reports – there wouldn't have been time left for anything else)]

Letter-writers, on the contrary, do not view ordinariness as an especially descriptive feature of who they are. Family roles and professional identities emerge as more important to them, both when they stand on their own (*me*) and when they speak for the

group (*we*)(see Table 2). They do attribute ordinariness to their collective image (14%), although not as generously as the editorialists who envision their audience (*you*) as being more ordinary (25.81%).

Here, it becomes apparent that the images of *you* circulating in editorials are cast after editorialists themselves rather than after the newspapers' most avid readers. In fact, roles reserved by editorialists for themselves and roles they attributed to the audience coincide 68.82% of the time, while only 36.56% of *you*-descriptors are shared by letter-writers. Why are they so determined to be seen as ordinary? A simple, pragmatic explanation is that an emphasis on ordinary qualities of *you* and *me* in editorials fits an overall strategy of tailoring the message to a general audience. Unfortunately for editorialists, a relatively low ranking of 'ordinary' self-descriptions in letters casts doubt on the effectiveness of this strategy as editorialists who are trying to pass for 'ordinary folks' do so excessively, thereby propelling associations which their audience prefers to de-emphasize.

The troubling disconnection between the two groups lies not so much in overemphasized ordinariness as in different ideas about what constitutes the disconnection. An excerpt from a 1996 editorial that is written as an imagined dialogue with Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov highlights a rhetorical strategy of ordinariness that, being based on a peculiar concept, backfires, contributing to a gap instead of a bond between elites and ordinary people.

- Помнишь,⁶ как Борис Николаевич, когда Москву возглавил, стал на работу на троллейбусе ездить?
 - Помню, говорю, был такой популизм.
 - То-то! - смеется Юрий Михайлович. А теперь кем он стал, чуешь?
Короче, как выпишут - домой на улицу Осеннюю "быдлом" поеду. Какие там у вас цены за проезд?
 - Полторы тысячи талончик, говорю, но вас и бесплатно провезут!
 Какая смелость! - внутренне восклицаю я, кладя трубку. Одно смущает: вдруг он на рыбалку меня в электричку потащит! По нынешней жаре это крайне утомительно. (*Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 1996, July 13)

[“Do you remember Boris Nikolaevich, when he became a Moscow’s head, riding a trolley-bus to get to the office?”
 “I do,” I reply, “there was such populism.”
 “That’s right,” laughs Yuri Mikhailovich. “And what has he become now, see? Well, as soon as I am released, I’m going home to Osenniaia Street on the bus. What fares do you have now for a bus-ride?”
 “One and a half thousand,” I say, “but they will take you for free.”
 “What courage!” I exclaim to myself, having hung up. Except one thing: what if he is taking me fishing on a commuter train! In the current heat, it is most tiring.]

In this imagined dialog, the mayor appears to be contemplating political advantages that ordinariness might bring him. Recalling an episode from the early days of Yeltsin’s rise to power that included his rebellious (as it appeared at the time) use of public transportation instead of an office car, Luzhkov is described as plotting a similar ride for himself. But unlike Yeltsin, whose fumbling through his pockets to find small change for a bus-pass made the news and generated a wave of sentimental feelings among the general public, Luzhkov’s ignorance of the bus-fares in the city he governs is less praiseworthy. Despite his use of colorful, colloquial language, the episode depicts him as detached from the people and their daily life, with riding a bus

⁶ All underlined phrases in this dialog are colloquial expressions used to create an impression of an ‘ordinary guy’ via plain talk.

being the only “ordinary” link that he could imagine while working out his ‘populist’ strategy.

Editorialists’ presentations of the ‘ordinary’ do not place them closer to the people either. Their concept of ‘ordinary’ appears to be composed of snippets from the life of a stereotypical urban office clerk, a style that looks ordinary to a fairly narrow segment of the population:

Каждый день, просыпаясь и потягиваясь, съедая бутерброд и заглывая кофе, толкаясь локтями в троллейбусе и ворча на службе, мы, не отдавая себе в этом отчета, творим действительность. Создаем то, что потомки назовут национальным бытом конца XX - начала XXI века. (Izvestiia, 2000, April 12)

[Every day, waking up and stretching, eating up a sandwich and washing it down with coffee, elbowing our way on a bus and being grumpy in the office, we, without registering it, are creating reality. <We are> creating what the following generations will call a national lifestyle of the late XX- early XXI century.]

On the other hand, when letter-writers refer to the ordinary, they associate it with a different set of behaviors, highlighting the lack of organization and discipline in public life (*Почему до сих пор паркуемся где попало? Почему возмущаемся проверке документов? И почему во всем и всегда виним только власть?* [Why are we still parking wherever? Why <are we> getting angry at the ID check? And why <are we> always and for everything blame only the authorities?]), extreme lifestyles (*Мы заняты либо прожиганием несправедно нажитого, либо находимся на грани выживания* [We are either busy burning the candle from both ends with illegal riches or balancing at the edge trying to survive]), or consequences of political decisions as in the text below:

Все армии мира и во все времена терпели поражения именно из-за политиков. Ибо сама армия войн не начинает, начинают их политики. А армия все это дело расхлебывает. А если быть честным, то расхлебывают обычные люди, такие, как мы с вами, из которых армия и состоит. И всегда расхлебывать политические просчеты будем мы, потому что армия не церковь и отделить ее от государства нельзя. (Ogoniok, 2004, February 29)

[All armies in the world and at all times suffered defeat because of politicians. For the army itself does not start wars, those are started by politicians. And the army is cleaning up their mess. And to be honest, it is us, ordinary people like you and me, who are cleaning it, <since> the army is made of us. And we will always be paying for political blunders because the army is not the church and one cannot separate it from the state.]

This brief survey of self-references shows that letter-writers see themselves performing a set of roles of which editorialists are unaware and to which they do not speak. The difference between the views of editorialists and letter-writers becomes more discernible in their discussions of collective identities, a subject to which I now turn.

At the beginning of this section, I referred to the work of Michael Billig (1995) on the role of ‘small words’ in producing and maintaining nations. My analysis of the Russian newspapers shows that *their national story is rather complicated*. On the one hand, in talking about collective identity (*we*), both editorials (22.11%) and letters to the editor (25.09%) refer first and foremost to *us, the Russian people* (see Table 3). On the other hand, *we* appears to be a fuzzy notion, inclusive of many groups performing many roles (Peterloo, 2007). Even if a mission of building a nation exists for the Russian press, it does not exhaust all possibilities for groups and collectives in public life or on the printed page.

In addition, the fuzziness of *we* in my data has a peculiar Russian strand to it. Scholars of contemporary Russian society noted that many individual identities have been “lost in transition,” the old ones having become useless and only a handful of the new ones having been worked out. Some scholars depict the situation in grimmer tones:

The traditional Soviet careers are not available anymore; they have given way to avoid or to some miraculously promising opportunities for those who seek them. The society is in fundamental turmoil. There is no longer a hierarchy, no widely accepted way to display status, making it very much like a carnival, particularly since the collective identity has also collapsed. (Neidhart, 2003, p. 215)

This picture may accurately capture the connection between the fuzziness of identities and political and social restructuring but it somewhat exaggerates the disappearance of the ‘essence’ of what makes Russians the way they are.

Table 6.3

Semantic Roles of WE vs THEY in Two Genres (%)

Rank	LETTERS				EDITORIALS			
	WE (n=550)		THEY (n=379)		WE (n=303)		THEY (n=171)	
1	Russian	25.09	ordinary	16.62	Russian	22.11	voter	40.35
2	ordinary	14.00	official	15.30	citizen	19.47	ordinary	15.79
3	professional	8.18	professional	12.40	ordinary	13.53	Russian	12.28
4	resident	7.64	Russian	8.97	voter	8.58	individual	8.1
5	family member	7.45	age group	5.80	professional	7.59	partisan	5.85

Aside from a heavy focus on national identity, the composition of *our* roles in editorials and letters shows that three out of the five top characteristics of *we* (Russians,

ordinary people, professionals) cut across the genres (Table 3). Notably, among the top five roles in editorials, two are quite politicized - voters and citizens, precisely the two that do not appear on the list of top five in letters and are replaced by roles outside institutional politics, such as residents and family members. *We, the citizens* and *we, the voters* do figure in letters but only occasionally, taking up 3.64% and 3.09% of the references respectively.

If Russians are called upon as voters and citizens (as evidenced by editorials), why don't they respond to such calls more enthusiastically? Is it the fault of the people or of the mobilization pitch? An explanation of the relative 'unfamiliarity' of the masses with those roles does not sound convincing in the Russian context. Indeed, recent history of the nation speaks volumes against it: Russians are familiar with voting and in their former being as Soviet citizens, they were constantly reminded of their civic duties. Neither do they obstinately neglect those duties now. The key to the puzzle should thus be sought in the qualities of the 'call' itself.

Associations and attributes of voters in the two genres give some hint regarding the solution. Briefly stated, people are reluctant to step into the voting shoes designed for them by the elites. Letters reveal that Russians take voting seriously even if they note legal breaches or are otherwise unhappy with the campaign. Their sense of duty prevails and they resolutely show up at the voting booth:

Проголосовала я. Конечно, проголосовала. Поскольку много раз слышала, что "важен каждый голос" и т.д. (Izvestiia, 2004, March 16)

[I voted. Of course I voted. Because many times I heard that 'every vote counts' etc.]

После любых выборов ни один избиратель в нашем городе не может узнать на своем участке, какими же оказались результаты голосования. Эти сведения на участках не вывешиваются. До выборов заманивают, заискивают, но голосование прошло - и больше ты никому не нужен (Izvestiia, 2004, March 16)

[After any elections, none of the voters in our town can find out at their precinct what the result of the voting was. This information is not posted at the precincts. Before the election, they lure you in, bend over for you, but once election is over – no one needs you any more.]

Citizens' understanding of representation, of the rights and responsibilities of public officials, and of the public may not be well-shaped and may be full of contradictions, yet when voting surfaces in a conversation, it is presented as an absolutely compelling act:

Скоро новые выборы главы государства, и мы окажемся перед фактом: как нам голосовать - сердцем или разумом, чтобы не ошибиться и не сожалеть о своем собственном выборе? Мы - люди - так устроены, что предпочитаем жить сообща в государстве, жить в государстве удобно, выгодно, теплей, светлей, сытней. Обмениваясь опытом и знаниями, дополняя друг друга, мы непрерывно совершенствуемся. Мы выбираем себе главу государства, наделяем его особой властью, содержим его, его семью и огромный государственный аппарат, чтобы при помощи этого аппарата он разумно, со знанием дела, управлял государством, защищал наши права и создавал нам социально-правовой климат, в котором мы могли бы трудиться во благо себе и нашему государству. (Nezavisimaja Gazeta, 2008, February 19)

[Soon <we will have> a new presidential election, and we will face the fact: how should we vote – with our hearts or with our minds, so that we don't make a mistake and don't feel sorry about our own choice? We – humans – are made in such a way that <we> prefer to live together in a state, to live in a state is more comfortable, more profitable, warmer, brighter, fuller. Exchanging experience and knowledge, complementing each other, we are constantly getting better. We are choosing a head of the state for ourselves, vesting him with special power, provide for his family and a huge state apparatus in order for him to use that apparatus reasonably, knowledgably and run the state, defend our rights, and create a social and legal climate for us in which we could work for the good of our state and our own.]

Editorialists, on the other hand, oscillate between explanations of the necessity to vote and remarks about the cynicism of authorities, rigged results, indifferent or duped voters, and the overall staged nature of political events, all of which could effectively discourage voters instead of engaging them:

Медведева все равно бы избрали. Большие выбирать было некого. Зачем фарс? Чтобы на Западе, который мы теперь великодержавно презираем, ни один комар носа не подточил? Надежда тщетная: понятия "Россия" и "демократия" там уже лет пять как антонимы. (Izvestiia, 2008, March 6)

[Medvedev would have been elected anyway. There was no one else to elect. Why act out a farce? So that in the West, to which we now feel imperial contempt, no one could find faults with us? Futile hopes! The notions of ‘Russia’ and ‘democracy’ have been antonyms there for some five years.]

Another line of a conceptual division between editorialists’ and letter-writers’ perception of *we* cuts through *our* capacities in various roles (see Table 6.4). Several observations merit attention here. First, editorialists see *us* as more pro-active regardless of the role *we* perform; to them, *we* are recognized and distinguished by our actions. Letter-writers, in contrast, do not perceive *us* as particularly active. They grant *us* capacities to perform those roles even if, for the time being, *we* remain passive. For example, letter-writers recognize *us, the citizens* because *we* are there most of the time (65%) while, for editorialists, *our* acts as citizens are twice as important in establishing *us* in that role.

Interestingly, national identity (*Russians*) is the only role on the list for which mere existence is a default mode recognizable both by editorialists and letter-writers. Second, editorialists perceive *us* as more emotional than contemplative, no matter what

the role. Letter-writers, on the other hand, do not see *us* as primarily emotional and are more likely than editorialists to feature *our* cognitive abilities. On the thinking/feeling continuum, perceptions of *us, the citizens* and *us, the voters* again become polarized. Editorialists attribute to *us, the voters*, no thoughts at all; letter-writers see *us* as not particularly emotional regardless of the role.

Table 6.4

Selected Roles and Cognitive Attributes of WE in Two Genres (%)

WE	N	ACTION	EMOTION	THOUGHT	EXISTENCE
RUSSIANS	LET (136)	33.82	8.82	10.29	47.06
	ED (67)	41.79	8.96	1.49	47.76
CITIZEN	LET (20)	25.00	0.00	10.00	65.00
	ED (59)	52.54	6.78	13.56	27.12
ORDINARY PEOPLE	LET (77)	48.05	5.19	11.69	35.06
	ED(41)	51.22	19.51	7.32	21.95
VOTERS	LET (57)	57.89	1.75	10.53	29.82
	ED(26)	57.69	26.92	0.00	15.38

What forces might be driving these elite perceptions of *us*, making them so different from the image of *us* created by lay descriptions? One possible explanation draws upon observations of the management of public emotions in the Soviet Union made by Yekelchik (2006). In those days, he noted, not all forms of political participation were equally welcomed. Citizens were supposed to internalize Marxist teachings and socialist ideology and emotionally respond to political events (p.531). Among “obligatory” civic emotions routinely promoted via newspapers were love of the Motherland and gratitude to the Soviet state and Soviet leaders for personal well-being

and a guaranteed happy future (ibid). Thinking and ideological judgment were prerogatives of the party leadership who worked out the only correct, theory-informed line in national policies and the proper conduct for individuals – the Soviet people. Although contemporary editorials are not heavily inflected with any party ideology, their vision of new collective identities resembles old expectations of loyalty from citizens who are allowed to have political feelings but who are struck down for having political thoughts.

With the general patterns of ‘small words’ in my data being mapped out, I shall now turn to issues of national identity (*we, Russians*), keeping in mind that it is by far the most popular role *we* adopt, that the two genres tend to disagree on the amount of feeling and thinking *we* do in any role, and that their ideas about the content of those roles also show variations. My texts demonstrate that in both genres Russians are defined primarily via their relationship to the country (or the state) while ethnic characteristics are hardly ever mentioned. This does not come as an entirely surprising fact given the origin of a newly-coined word that describes Russians as a national group. In the 1990s, when the elites “faced the challenge” of defining the new entity, of preserving some and abandoning other ‘old’ traditions (Janack, 1996, p.8), the complexity of the ethnic composition on the post-Soviet territory and rampant national movements in the former republics pointed to the choice of an identity that (very much like the old Soviet one) was civic - rather than ethnically based. A word coined for this purpose (*rossiiane*), in contrast to a more ethnicity-evoking term (*russkie*), derives from the name of the state (*Rossia*), and for this reason was thought to provide an overarching identity for all

citizens of a new Russia.⁷ The word was found but a consensus on its content was not. And Russians had to get accustomed to multiple (and unpredictable, as the saying goes) pasts, uncertain or conflicting futures, and a new name for themselves. The debate surrounding Russian national identity is far from being settled. Until a new construct appears that better serves the changing needs of those who use it, it will continue to vary from discourse to discourse and from epoch to epoch.

Quite expected, therefore, are the different ideas of what it means to be Russian that circulate in editorials and letters to the editor. But the difference is consequential in several respects. If Russians do not share a uniform set of ideas about themselves as a people, how do leaders mobilize, organize, and persuade the masses? How do they meet challenges, define common goals and common grievances? Whose notion of ‘Russianness’, of the ‘nation’, of ‘we, the people’ is put on banners? In what capacity do Russians support their leaders, if they ever do so?

Answers to these questions can be sought on many terrains and sustain many future inquiries. My current research pinpoints two peculiarities. First, with ‘Russianness’ being the top collective attribute in both genres, lay voices sound quite finicky about who can act as a spokesperson for the nation. While they are content with the president speaking on their behalf, as one letter made it clear, glaring generalizations by editorialists who climb the national podium are not welcomed:

Хочу сказать о впечатлении, которое произвела на нашу семью статья Светланы Филоновой "И вновь пасхальный звон..." ("НГ" от 16.04.96). Я думаю, что мы имеем моральное право высказать мнение как

⁷ In English, a single lexeme ‘Russian’ references both ethnicity and citizenship, and the old opposition of Russian - Soviet now inconveniently renders Russian - Russian (!)

читатели, поскольку Вы, надо полагать, пишете для массового читателя, а не только для людей своего круга. Нас неприятно удивило, что Вы говорите как бы за всю русскую нацию (или за российский народ): "Мы живем... в вечном стремлении заткнуть кого-то за пояс..." И так далее до конца абзаца. (Nezavisimaia Gazeta, 1996, May 24)

[I] want to share an impression that Svetlana Filonova's article "And again the Easter Bells..." (NG 16.04.96) had on our family. I think that we have a moral right to express an opinion as your readers because you, one would believe, write for the mass reader and not only for the people of your circle. We were unpleasantly surprised to hear you speak as if on behalf of the whole Russian nation (or the Russian people): "We live... in an eternal strife to score points with someone..." and so on till the end of the paragraph.]

Secondly, when editorialists and letter-writers agree on national attributes, those are usually negative qualities for which both parties harshly criticize their fellow-citizens.

Speaks *Ogonyok*'s editorialist:

Самое страшное, что нас теперь в мире не боятся и не уважают. А раньше («государственный народ» в этом твердо уверен, хотя за границами раньше не бывал) уважали. Везде! Потенциал обиды за могучее прошлое стал мифологической (т.е. идейной) реальностью, с которой вынужден считаться любой практикующий политик. (Ogonyok, 2004, March 22)

[The most dreadful [thing] is that now no one in the world fears us or respects us. Earlier (the 'state people' are deeply convinced in that although back then they never travelled abroad) [they] respected us. Everywhere! A load of hurt feelings about the mighty past has already become a mythological (i.e. ideational) reality with which any active politician has to deal.]

In their turn, letter-writers worry about growing feelings of 'national pride' that rest on a shaky foundation (*«национальная гордость» прямо-таки прет из нас во все стороны* [our 'national pride' bursts our sides in all directions]), particularly feelings that evoke Russia's imperial glory:

Образ великой империи, в которой все - самое лучшее (что очень далеко от правды), непрерывно стоит у нас перед глазами. Или мы должны быть выше всех, или провалиться нам сквозь землю! (Izvestiia, 2000, March 14)

[An image of a great empire, in which everything is the very best (which is very far from the truth) is constantly before our mind's eyes. We either have to be higher than anyone else or better vanish from the face of the earth]

Есть такое понятие - "фантомные боли". Мы давно не империя зла, а вот старые фобии все еще дают о себе знать. Когда все шагают левой, а ты один правой, то не следует ли поменять шаг? (Izvestiia, 2004, April 4)

[There is such a notion – a ‘lost limb’ pain. We are no longer an empire of evil, but our old phobias still remind us about themselves. When everyone is marching along and you alone are out of step, shouldn’t one switch the step?]

Presenting people – individually or in groups – can be achieved via numerous devices including manipulation of attributions (of which this section has produced many examples) and the use of stereotypes that disregard individual characteristics in favor of common generalizations and that place *us* against *them*. In communication studies and social psychology research, polarization has been shown to be of primary political importance in times of wars, conflicts, and situations for which public consensus is crucial, although it is useful in other domains as well, for instance, in sports, advertising, etc. The key feature of polarization is a constructed and reinforced partition between a positive self-image and a negative image of ‘the other.’ In case the evidence of our wrongdoing is undeniable and our positive image is marred, stereotyping goes further and explains our good qualities as permanent and our bad behavior as accidental. My discussion of a failure of editorial ‘calls’ to resonate with the audience would be

incomplete without examining the dichotomy of *us* versus *them*. In a manner similar to their standing on other measures described above, the two genres show several commonalities and a number of diverging characteristics in their treatment of *them*. With the distance between *us* and *them* growing in both genres, letter-writers appear to be slightly more persistent in drawing the line between themselves and their opponents, contributing to a production of a stronger, more unified front of *us*. The question that demands to be asked here is who those groups or individuals are? Are they new actors whose presence is now being noticed or are they the old crowd that, until now, have been ignored?

Descriptions of the opposing groups in my texts reveal that letter-writers' 'others' are most frequently composed of ordinary people and public officials (see Table 6.3), of whom they complain, against whom they struggle daily, and whom they blame for the poor conditions of the country and the miserable lives of their fellow-citizens:

Что выиграли россияне за полтора десятилетия либеральных реформ? Возросла продолжительность их жизни? Они больше пьют молока и едят мяса? Исчезли пьянство, наркомания, преступность? Расцвела культура? Или все это на горизонте? В ответ замордованные избиратели слышат, что "к реформам в РФ по-настоящему еще не приступали, но в случае победы правых..." В ужасе отшатнулись россияне от подобной перспективы, проголосовав за кого угодно, но обещавшего стабильность (Izvestiia, 2004, April 5)

[What did Russians win for a decade and a half of liberal reforms? Their life expectancy grew up? They drink more milk and eat more meat? Alcoholism, drug-use, and crime disappeared? The arts blossomed? Or is this all still over the horizon? In response, the wore-out voters hear that "reforms in the RF have not been attempted in honest, but in case the right wing wins..." Horrified, the Russians jumped away from such a prospect, giving their vote to anyone who promised stability.]

Editorialists are also engaged in negative identity-building. Yet, they use different groups as a background against which *we* stand out. Their collective nemesis consist of voters (40.35%), followed by ordinary people, and then Russians in general (see Table 6.3):

Провинция и при Путине будет жить не Интернетом и новейшими технологиями, а картофельным наделом. Который будут самоотверженно засаживать весной, с которого будут маниакально вручную обирать колорадского жука летом и на уборку которого мобилизуют всю родню по осени. (Izvestiia, 2000, March 28)

[Even under Putin, the country will live not by the Internet and the new technologies but by the potato plot. Which will be heroically planted in the spring, from which, in a maniac manner, by hand, one will collect the bugs in the summer, and to harvest which all relatives will be mobilized, come the fall.]

This roster confirms that Russian elites and ordinary people do not have a common enemy, certainly not a common external enemy. Instead, their ‘Other’ is an internal figure. The line between *us* and *them* discursively constructed in newspapers runs between different groups of Russians.

Richardson (2001b) once noted that journalistic output, “simultaneously constitutive of [the] social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and beliefs,” reflects identities, relations, knowledge, and beliefs of the educated, empowered, and economically successful section of society (p.144). Newspapers in general and editorials in particular, as examples of elite discourse, “represent important sites for the (re)production and /or resistance of discourse on and around notions of ‘We-dom’ and ‘They-dom’,” as Hartley (1992) labeled them. As the data presented above make obvious, Russian editorialists and Russian newspaper readers might well be residing in different ‘-doms’ and, as a result, talk past each other at least some of the time.

MISMATCHED AGENDAS

Letters responding to previous publications in the newspaper provide instant feedback to journalists on their work and give a snapshot of the readers' interests and preferences, tastes and convictions, background and current concerns. Of course, topics picked up by the readers in their letters to the editor only partially reflect the diversity and depth of the materials that appear in the press, but they do show which issues are salient in the public mind. As agenda-setting theory predicts, if the media tell the public 'what to think about,' topics raised by readers could provide a fair measurement of the papers' agenda-setting capacity. The closer the readers' and the newspapers' lists of topics are to each other, the more power over the public agenda can be attributed to a given newspaper. It is unquestionable that the composition of the letters' page is controlled by the editor. *Ogonyok's* letters' section, for instance, is increasingly being structured so as to form a more or less coherent thematic unit, in which letters respond to the same publication or talk about a similar topic. In what follows, I will discuss the topical choices and authorial voices with which editorialists and letter-writers present their comments, choices that cast doubts on the agenda-setting capacity of the Russian press in the realm of politics.

Overall, letters to the editor in my sample contain more pieces prompted by newspapers' previous publications than those that address topics overlooked by journalists⁸ (Table 6.5). On matters like health issues, economic well-being, education

⁸ Letters that respond to previous publications bear an editorial insertion with the date of the related publication unless writers provide titles and other identifying information for the pieces they refer to. These textual markers were taken into consideration separating responding letters from non-responding ones.

and jobs, family relations and the generation gap, letters tend to follow the lead of the newspaper. Readers give advice, share stories from their own experience, express their support of the affected parties, or state their disagreement with the viewpoint presented in the publication.

Table 6.5

Thematic Composition of Letters

	n (%)	RESPONDING	NON-RESPONDING
Politics	39 (13.27)	13 (4.42)	26 (8.84)
Social Climate	58 (19.73)	36 (12.24)	22 (7.48)
Life Spheres	129 (43.88)	76 (25.85)	53 (18.03)
Mix	69 (23.47)	35 (11.90)	34 (11.56)
TOTAL	294 (100.00)	159 (54.08)	135 (45.92)

One observation, however, indicates that the contemporary Russian media might be losing their standing as a political agenda-setter. While Russian editorialists, as Chapter 5 argued, appear to be fascinated by the world of politics and focus their comments on it on three out of five occasions, their thematic range and their views on these political matters do not seem satisfactory to all readers. That is, *letters to the editor address a range of political issues broader than editorialists ever attempt in their writing*. Table 6.5 shows that readers are twice as likely to talk about political topics that have not been discussed by the newspapers.

Additionally, despite descending to the bottom of the priority list for many letter-writers, politics remains the only thematic domain that generates more autonomous

comments, comments not connected to the newspaper's previous publications. To put it differently, in the area where the media are expected to lead opinion and shape public attitudes -- namely, in the realm of politics during the electoral campaign season -- Russian newspapers fail to set the agenda. The finding that political issues raised by the readers independently outnumber those prompted by media materials also gives support to the image of an engaged and politically conscious, rather than apathetic and unmotivated, public.

Moreover, *letter-writers come across not only as vocal in political matters but also as having more confidence in their fellow-citizens as agents of change.* Discussing prospects of change, they place most of their hopes on the people themselves and express a fair amount of hope that the people will make their own lives better:

Братья Лещенко -- первые носители новой, нормальной идеологии, которая нашу страну может спасти. Если как можно больше людей скажут: «Хочу жить хорошо. Чтоб дети не болели, чтоб бандиты жизнь не портили, чтоб в магазине все было, чтоб государство мое будущее не гробило, дало мне развернуться так, как я хочу, говорить то, что думаю, и добиться того, что мне под силу, а не того, что регламентировано партией», -- то тогда будет легче нам с вами бороться с глупыми законами, жадными политиками, зарвавшимися чиновниками и ментами-беспредельщиками. (Ogonyok, 2000, April 24)

[Leschenko bothers are first bearers of the new, normal ideology that can save our country. If more and more people say, “[I] want to live well. So that children are healthy, that gangsters do not spoil our life, that the store are very stocked, that the state does not ruin my future but let me live the way I want, speak what I think, and achieve what I am capable of and not what is regimented by the party,” then you and me will find it easier to fight dumb laws, greedy politicians, overreaching bureaucrats, and self-serving cops]

Editorialists, in contrast, place their hopes on institutions and officials, viewing ordinary citizens – in groups or individually - as less likely candidates for either initiating or carrying out change.

Суть в том, что у нас нет политической системы. Прeжняя политическая система, компрадорская и продажная, разрушена, а новой нет. Путин сегодня - единственный политик (см. текущие президентские выборы). Отстроить новую политическую систему - сегодня главная задача. (Izvestiia, 2004, March 3)

[The core of the matter is that we don't have a political system. The old political system, comprador and corrupt, is dismantled, but the new does not exist. Today Putin is the only politician (see the current presidential elections). To build a new system is the main task today]

Одна из самых главных задач перед новой эпохой и новым президентом - это закончить с "кризисом в головах". (Ogoniok, 2008, March 3)

[One of the most important tasks before the new era and the new president is to stop the 'crisis in <our> heads']

Quantitative support for this pattern of change agents is presented in Table 6.6, which aligns the top five change agents mentioned in the texts. A comparison of the two lists foregrounds three major differences between editorialist and letter-writers' views of the driving forces of change in Russia: 1) a relatively low ranking of the president as a change agent in letters as compared to editorials; 2) a high ranking of the media by letter-writers and their placement at the bottom third (not shown here) in editorials; and 3) no mention of ideas as a change agent in editorials.

The relatively unimpressive focus on the president as a change agent among the lay public runs counter to the frequently cited approval ratings of his performance that

have stayed record high (over 80%) for quite some time, thereby attesting to Russians’ alleged predisposition for a strong leader and their deeply rooted authoritarianism (at least according to some experts). My data, unfortunately, cannot support a counterargument to these predispositions. What they do, however, is problematize such interpretations. At least in the minds of Russian letter-writers, the president does not stand quite so tall, even though editorialists place quite a lot of hope in him.

Table 6.6

Top Change Agents Mentioned in Two Genres

Rank	LETTERS	EDITORIALS
1	People	Authorities
2	Media	President
3	Groups	People
4	President	Individuals
5	Individuals	Groups

Also, letter-writers (but not editorialists) recognize the potential of the media to lead change, granting them more transformative powers than they allocate for the president or any set of collective forces. Whether the Russian media are willing (and able) to be change agents is not clear. Editorials that do not mention reformist roles for themselves may signal a lack of enthusiasm about change on their part. Editorialists’ silence regarding the media’s activism comes hand-in-hand with a peculiar absence of ideas on the roster of powerful agents, which looms even larger given the period of “acute” debating in the press in the early 1990s. “Chaotic and effervescent,” debates rang

out for a real struggle for power (McAuley, 1997, p.20). Unfortunately, in present-day Russia, a mood has set in that “everything that needed to be said” has been said (Dawisha, 2005), discouraging public debates about such events as the Beslan’s school hostage crisis in 2004, the submarine Kursk explosion in 2000, the Moscow theater siege in 2002, bombing on transportation and in apartment complexes, etc.

In a quiescent climate that has set in the press regarding truly contestable issues, it is reassuring to see that the *rhetorical persona of a letter-writer is still politically assertive*. Among the four available stances -- from a group representative to an affiliated private individual to an impersonal abstraction -- letter-writers most often choose to stand on their own and to speak their minds (Chapter 4). Editorialists, on the other hand, are more willing to convey their stories in an impersonal voice than to adopt a definitive stance (Chapter 5). They also consistently refrain from making remarks supportive of groups as their representatives or (covertly) as sympathizers of group causes. Letter-writers, in contrast, are more than willing to speak on behalf of all groups, both large (*we, the nation*) and small (*we, the family*).

Moving to another topic, stances preferred by editorialists and letter-writers follow a striking pattern. In both genres, the most frequently heard voices are individual and impersonal while voices of group representatives and sympathizers fall into a less vocal category. Such a coordinated split reveals a shared understanding of the repertoire of public roles. It also implies an agreement on the social and political functions of a newspaper as a site where those voices are exercised: neither editorialists nor letter-writers use their speaking opportunities to advocate – first and foremost – on behalf of

some group, even though a concern for the collective interest is revealed in some of their writing.

Table 6.7

Distribution of Author's Stance in Genres over Time (%)

	REP		SYMPATHIZER		SELF		IMPERSONAL	
	ED	LET	ED	LET	ED	LET	ED	LET
1996	10.45	25.68	7.46	14.86	37.31	45.95	44.78	13.57
2000	4.55	20.22	11.36	11.24	25.00	42.70	59.09	25.84
2004	2.13	16.18	12.77	5.88	25.53	48.53	59.57	24.41
2008	7.41	22.22	7.41	19.05	31.48	33.33	53.70	25.40

The frequencies with which the four voices appear in each genre are indicative of their different “purchasing power.” A personal voice capitalizes on the power of an eye-witness and an emotional account of events. It has the authority of a testimonial that cannot be denied unless it is refuted on the grounds of its scope (that is, that unique experiences are rarely generalizable or replicable). For letter-writers, an individual voice brings the advantage of self-expression, of a subjective, emotional, opinionated account. The same voice is less advantageous for editorialists whose ability to supply an ‘objective’ frame to the situation comes to the forefront overshadowing their personal opinions. In contrast, an impersonal voice is helpful in producing an ‘objective’ presentation but loses the persuasive advantages of a personal touch. Such a voice fits editorialists but sounds somewhat out of place. Speaking on behalf of a group bolsters letter-writers’ arguments and gives them the leverage of collective opinion. An

editorialist appealing to a broader audience in a group voice, on the other hand, is likely to sound partisan, an outcome that might be sought by the partisan press but that would be seen as undesirable in the mainstream media outlets I analyzed.

Table 6.8

Distribution of Author's Stance in Russian Press 1996-2008 by Genre (%)

		REP	SYMPATHIZER	SELF	IMPERSONAL
<i>Izvestiia</i>	ED	10.67	8.00	5.33	76.00
	LET	20.62	12.37	41.24	25.77
<i>Nezavisimaia</i>	ED	1.33	4.00	44.00	50.66
	LET	32.73	3.64	36.36	27.27
<i>Ogonyok</i>	ED	8.06	17.74	45.16	29.03
	LET	16.90	16.20	46.48	20.42

Thus, a possible explanation of the rhetorical choices in voice might lie with the political profile of the newspaper. The preferred tonality of editorials, in particular, seems to be connected to that aspect of the newspapers. For example, *Ogonyok's* editorialists tend to speak more eagerly as individuals and provide comments in a personalized voice, while other newspapers show a clear preference for a more detached, impersonal tone (see Table 6.8). Letters published in *Ogonyok* exhibit a similar tendency, although their 'group' voice is twice as 'loud' as it is with editors. A close resemblance in stances between *Ogonyok's* editorials and letters (see Table 6.7) creates an impression (and adds to the popularity) of a publication that is more responsive to its readers than is true in other publications, whose editorial voice sounds strikingly different from the voices in the letters they publish.

Nezavisimaya Gazeta, for instance, refrains from sounding partisan. In the years sampled, the paper exercised its ‘group’ voice on a single occasion. Notable within *Nezavisimaiia* is a focused effort to stay away from expressing commitment, although its readers often speak on behalf of various groups almost as often as they discuss their own issues and over thirty times more often than the paper itself. *Nezavisimaiia*’s legacy of independence from any political affiliation probably explains this reluctance of its editorialists to take sides.

In comparison, *Izvestiia*’s editorialists appear very hesitant about adopting an individual voice and resort to it only 5.33% of the time, but do not hesitate to adorn an impersonal mask (76%) most of the time. *Izvestiia*’s letter-writers, however, do not share this preference. They were almost eight times more ‘individualistic’ and close to three times less impersonal than their editorialists. Like letter-writers in other newspapers, *Izvestiia*’s correspondents tend to speak as individuals quite eagerly but the rhetorical gap between the readers and editorialists in *Izvestiia* is larger than in other newspapers. Two competing forces in Russian journalism are likely to be responsible for *Izvestiia*’s outlook. First is the tradition of Soviet reporting still lingering in what used to be the media outlet of the Soviet government, and the second is the effort by its current owners to foster western-type journalism with standards of objectivity and unbiased reporting. Both forces are supportive of journalism that values factual over sensationalized

presentations. In *Izvestiia*, factual writing overpowers personal overtones that editorialists in other newspapers can allow themselves.⁹

Table 6.8 shows the distinct political profiles of my newspapers, showing the degree of detachment and neutrality they practice. These data lead us to believe that the mainstream media in Russia have not become a mouthpiece of the political parties nor have they been hijacked by a political group or turned into a propaganda machine. Their ‘representative’ voice is too soft to carry out that task and does not present a mobilizing, agitating force that could bring readers together in support of a particular cause.

How does the Russian public take the newspapers that talk past them and discuss a narrow range of safe topics on which they avoid taking sides? The short and optimistic answer is that people have not yet written the media off. They believe that the media can be instrumental in changing life for the better once they adopt a more pro-active role in society. That is, *the public appears to demand a more responsive and responsible media*. My texts provide numerous examples of readers placing demands on newspapers regarding content (especially, advertisements), topical treatments, neutrality of presentations, reluctance to act as public advocates, and the like. The examples below testify to the range of those demands:

Газета - собеседник для тех, чьей капризной голове мало читать вывески и квитанции, кого после обеда тянет осмыслить происходящее [...] Может быть, нам, осознающим, что слова - в каком-то смысле игра, нужно хотя

⁹ In 2004 *Izvestiia*'s editor in chief Raf Shakirov lost his job due to the ‘emotional coverage’ of Beslan school hostage crisis that included photographs considered by Russian authorities to be ‘too vivid’ a portrayal of violence. However, this incident did not prompt *Izvestiia*'s editorialist to be more impersonal and abstract. Even before Beslan, the ‘abstract’ voice dominated the publication reaching 82.35% (2000) and 88.24% (2004). Simultaneously, in those years the partisan (group representative) voice was completely absent from *Izvestiia*'s editorial page.

бы уменьшить обличительный пафос? И попытаться увидеть жизнь в реальной сложности, а себя - в реальном масштабе? (Izvestiia, 2000, March 15)

[A newspaper [is] an interlocutor for those whose capricious head is not satisfied with reading signage and receipts, who after lunch is inclined to think about the current events... Maybe we, who realizes that words are in some sense a play, need to lower our blaming pathos? And to try and see life in its real complexity and ourselves – in [our] real dimensions?]

Вы анализируете рынок. В том числе информируете, воспитываете и защищаете потребителя. Эта статья именно о рынке, и именно о потребителе. Я предлагаю Вам открыть новую рубрику под названием "Политтовар. Реклама и покупка". Предлагаю статью для этой рубрики. (Nezavisimaia Gazeta, 2008, February 19)

[You analyze market. And also inform, educate, and protect the consumer. This article is precisely about market and precisely about the consumer. I am proposing for you to open a new section called “Political product. Advertising and purchasing.” [I am] offering here an article for that section.]

In these excerpts, the Russian public comes across as having a very clear idea of the current situation in the media. Not all of them are happy about it, and some are raising their voices against rampant criticism of everything and simultaneous neglect of the problems that an ordinary person faces in everyday life. Moreover, they are not happy with having to wait for the media to change. Instead, as a letter from *Nezavisimaia* has shown, some readers go as far as to supply materials that they believe will fit the newspaper’s profile and market niche.

The trends identified so far – a disconnect between the agendas, different views on the driving forces of change and agents that can lead it, the adoption or abandonment of authorial (and authoritative) stances, and finally, demands on the media – suggest that Russian editorials might be losing their opinion-shaping power. But as it turns out, this

discordance between the two agendas, between the ‘call’ and the ‘response,’ is not unique to Russia. Over forty years of agenda-setting research have established that the relationship between the media’s agenda and the public’s is “curvilinear” (Miller & Krosnick, 2000; Ha 2002). What the public considers a priority is influenced by its exposure to the media as well as by its level of political sophistication. Low exposure or high political sophistication weakens the agenda-setting effect (McCombs, 2005, p. 551). These two factors are likely to be at play in my data as well. An act of writing and sending a letter to the newspaper requires a high level of attention to current affairs and a feeling of urgency about a disturbing situation. Earlier research on readers’ correspondence in the U.S. established that letter-writers belong to a better informed, more involved, and politically active segment of the population (Buell, 1975; Volgy, Krigbaum, Langan, & Moshier, 1977; Reader, 2005). My texts speak of comparable qualities in Russian letter-writers: they are knowledgeable, outspoken, and proactive. Thus, it is plausible that the Russian media agenda-setting efforts are counteracted by readers’ own agendas.

A second variable affecting the agenda is the presence of other agenda-setting entities in contemporary society (church, state, school, and the like). To the extent that individuals “regard these agendas as pertinent to their lives,” explains McCombs (2005, p. 554), media agenda-setting effects become diffused. Alternatively, one can describe the dispersion as multiple (and competing) ‘calls’ on the individual consumer. That is, more compelling calls may receive more attention from an individual and are thus able to set the agenda for him or her. Letters in Russian newspapers clearly suggest that other

influences are at work that produce the public more organized, mobilized, even more politicized than what an editorial call might have produced.

What difference does it make that the public's and the media's agenda are incongruent? Is it desirable for them to be a mirror image of each other? If not, at what point does incongruence become intolerable? Usually, incongruence between the agendas represents a lack of consensus between the groups. However, such a consensus is not universally desirable. To some, media consensus-building can sound like mass manipulation (Takeshita, 2005, p. 286). Others praise the media for providing space for public deliberation, a commodity much needed in democratic societies. Chantal Mouffe (2005), for instance, argued that democracy is "in peril" not only when there is insufficient consensus but also when there exists an "apparent excess" of it, usually "mask[ing] a disquieting apathy" (p.6).

When they foster consensus and avoid conflict, the media face the danger of losing their audience. As Kriesi (2008) notes, "Citizens are not interested in political debates where all participants agree" (p. 153). The centrist line of keeping away from conflict also reduces electoral participation and opens the door to elitist politics that allows a handful of politicians to make decisions that affect everyone. The absence of "a political frontier," states Mouffe, is not "a sign of political maturity." Instead, it should be considered "the symptom of a void that can endanger democracy," because, she warned, this vacant space can quickly be occupied by anti-democratic forces (p.5-6).

Conflict and consensus -- so essential to democratic politics -- are also constitutive of the 'journalistic field,' to borrow a term from Bourdieu. But those should

not be limited to the conflict among the key players that the news media have made a staple (Bennett, 1996). Following the official line and indexing the conflict among the powerful, the media may attract an audience and stir emotions but they run the danger of reducing public participation to spectatorship. Democratic contestation presupposes an engaged public that is willing to argue about its interests. The discussion in this section points to an active group within the Russian public – the letter-writers - who uses newspapers as a medium through which to vocalize their concerns, to draw attention to problems, or to place demands on authorities. The presence of these demands points not only to diverging agendas but also to a level of political sophistication among the Russian public that the media underestimate. To phrase it in bolder terms, the lay voices in my sample sound more democratic than the public envisioned by the media. How the newspapers deal with their activist letter-writers and what they are doing to meet their demands are questions I will engage in the section that follows.

DISSOLVING POLITICAL ACTIVISM

An earlier discussion of lexical features of editorials and letters to editor has indicated a remarkable similarity in their descriptions of the political world and has pointed out that Russian elites have little need to worry about being misunderstood by the masses due to the lack of a common language. When it comes to political vocabulary, Russian elites and Russian masses are on the same wavelength. Both groups employ a similar set of metaphors to describe politics, placing authorities at the top, attributing considerable expertise in political matters to politicians, keeping the future obscure and the past undecided. This concord, however, is systematically undermined by adoption of

a pedestrian vocabulary and the incessant irony of editorialists, contributing to a grand scale de-politicization of the Russian public by these elites.

A pedestrian vocabulary marks editorials as a genre of and for a closely-knit circle. An embrace of the vernacular by the contemporary Russian media several years ago produced a chorus of voices that had not been heard since the chaotic years of the Bolshevik revolution. As in the early 20th century, in the early days of glasnost the new voices in the public sphere, “voices of democracy and capitalism,” as Gorham (2003) labeled them, “flooded the press, airwaves, the public rallies” and urged people “to abandon the canonical scripts” of the old empire and start speaking their minds (p.179). The “verbal mix of neologisms, bureaucratese, nonstandard slang, and high Marxist rhetoric” (ibid.) used to describe new concepts was something to which Russians were unaccustomed. The situation strongly resembled the early 1920s when the country learned to ‘speak Bolshevik.’ A comparable cacophony in the public sphere also existed in the 1920s in the U.S. Says Cmiel (1990):

Everywhere you looked – the popular press, political oratory, courtroom forensics, and religious homiletics – the story was the same: all combined the refined and crude. The stylistic bricolage made it maddeningly hard to divide the world into the few and the many, impossibly difficult to see which men were ‘truly’ gentlemen, which women ‘really’ ladies (p. 15).

Yet colloquial speech and a “maddening” bricolage of styles praised as signs of democratization in Russia also lend themselves to a less laudable interpretation. On the one hand, the mosaic of styles indeed reflects diverse audiences and suggests an active

role of the press in organizing public discussions, inclusive of many styles and many views. In these ways, the loosening of decorum helped to embrace the marginalized. On the other hand, in their enthusiasm for a colloquial presentation, the contemporary Russian media crossed all borders and undid more norms than the public was comfortable with. Eager to sound ‘down-to-earth’, they outshone the masses in their roles of true bearers of the colloquial idiom. Their forced vernacular, with its frequent wordplay and intricate allusions, exposed elitists who had adopted a new language as their group symbol. If such a language created a following, it found recruits among the elites (the media), not among the masses, and marked the former as special and somewhat privileged, thus producing the very result it was originally meant to counteract, namely, to break down barriers and shorten the distance between elites and the citizenry.

The informal vocabulary used in Russian editorials stands in contrast to the language used by letter-writers who opt for neutral lexis and maintain a greater formality addressing their prospective audience, be it editors or other readers. This discrepancy in style is indicative not only of the two distinct groups but also of the different power positions that letter-writers and editorialists hold. An observation made by V. Bhatia (1997) regarding academic writing helps explain the power dynamic here. Bhatia noted that those who have already mastered the genre also enjoy more freedom in bending generic conventions. Experts exploit the genre, while novice practitioners must closely follow the rules. “There is no better illustration of the saying ‘knowledge is power’ than the one in the case of generic power,” Bhatia remarks (p.362). Although editorialists and letter-writers do not operate within the same genre, within a newspaper, editors and

editorialists can hardly be denied mastery as well as considerable authority over the form and content of printed materials; hence their freedom to experiment with language.

Letter-writers are much less experienced in ‘newspaper talk,’ hence a stricter constraint on language and a preference for more formal expressions.

Vernacular speech in editorials would not be so rhetorically and politically consequential had it not been coupled with irony, jokes, and sarcasm. *Editorialists’ excessive humor up-ends the conventional vision of politics and severs a bond with the mass reader.* This, admittedly, sounds like a counterintuitive statement, given the recent history of humor (including political jokes) in Russian public discourse. During Soviet times, political jokes that circulated among close and trusted friends helped people navigate through the propaganda. Counteracting official lies, political jokes were, to borrow a phrase from Slavoj Žižek (1989), “the very condition for having a political position.” Irony aimed at the political doctrine with which all spheres of public life were supposed to align was particularly widespread among young people and intellectuals (Ryazanova-Clarke & Wade, 1999). With the political changes of the 1990s and the ease of party control over the media, irony - together with a new, younger cohort of journalists - made its way onto the screen and the printed page. But a humorous slant did not wear out after the totalitarian juggernaut collapsed. Quite the opposite occurred. Political jokes stayed and conquered the media.

All newspapers in my sample published sarcastic comments, but *Nezavisimaia Gazeta* went further and established a practice of publishing two editorials: one (in a neutral, factual tone) on the second page and the other – a funny one – on the front page.

Those humorous editorials written by the editor-in-chief himself featured a fictional character – Titus Sovetologov – whose comments freely mixed references to both Roman and Soviet empires to illuminate current events. Even after Vitaly Trejakov left *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, his innovation lived on and humorous editorials, now sung off by other fictitious characters, continue to appear on *Nezavisimaia*'s front page. The textual excerpts below offer a glimpse into the good-natured, and less so, remarks of Russian editorialists:

Дорогой Владимир Вольфович, на протяжении всей Вашей бурной политической деятельности наш еженедельник активно и с удовольствием освещал Ваши мероприятия, своевременно уделяя Вам вдвое больше места по сравнению с другими кандидатами, -- просто потому, что нам дорог веселый, радостный смех наших читателей. Помните об этом и смело ведите Россию на дно Индийского океана! (Огопуок, 2000, March 27)

[Dear Vladimir Volfovich, during your long and eventful political career, our weekly followed closely and with great pleasure your public appearances, giving you in a timely manner twice as much room compared to other candidates – simply because we care for joyful [and] merry laughter of our readers. Remember that and bravely lead Russia to the bottom of the Indian Ocean!¹⁰]

Кому как, а мне нынешняя политическая ситуация нравится. Во-первых, драйв. Во-вторых, интрига. Но больше всего мне нравится поведение отставленных министров. Отставку свою они оценивают мужественно и с восторгом. Министр здравоохранения Шевченко, к примеру, сразу дал «положительную, очень хорошую реакцию» на всю эту внезапность. И Г.Карелова, и.о. вице-преьера, отставку приветствует – как «свидетельство того, что президент России чутко реагирует на настроения людей». Радуются: министр финансов, министр по налогам и сборам, министр образования и другие бывшие. Бегают по коридорам Белого дома, каждый со своей веревкой намыленной. Кулаком себя в грудь бьют. Каются, как на процессе по делу «антисоветского правотроцкистского центра» в каком-нибудь

¹⁰ References are to the deliberately extravagant projects proposed by Vladimir Zhirinovksy, such as expanding Russia's borders to include all Asia up to the Indian ocean.

1937 году. Вредители мы, кричат, плохо работали, кричат, реформы тормозили (Nezavisimaia Gazeta, 2004, February 26)

[Tastes differ [of course] but I like the current political situation. First, the drive. Second, the intrigue. But most of all I like the behavior of the fired ministers. Their own resignation they take bravely and with excitement. Health Care Minister Shevchenko, for instance, gave an instant “positive and very good reaction” to all this suddenness. And G. Karelova, interim vice-president, welcomes [her own] resignation – as “evidence that Russia’s president quickly responds to the mood of the people.” [All are] happy: minister of finances, minister of taxation, minister of education and the other former. Running along the White House hallways, each with his own rope properly greased. Beating themselves on the chest. Confessing, as if during the trial of the “anti-Soviet right-Trotskyist center” somewhere in 1937. We are saboteurs, [they are] shouting, did not work well, [they are] shouting, were putting brakes on the reforms.]

These examples provide additional evidence that post-Soviet Russia is “sizzle[ing] with irony” (Neistadt, 2003, p.216). There, “little is taken seriously” and few are spared the barbed remarks of the satirist. What does it mean that Russians laugh at their otherwise sorry political situation and make fun of their authorities? The absence of order, a dismantled system of old social relations, and the lack of “a commonly accepted value system” led some commentators to believe that irony and a carnivalesque atmosphere have no future (p.217). For an insider, however, humor is not just temporary relief. It has a more permanent status and serves a far-reaching function. As Russian author Tatyana Tolstaya (2007) mentioned in her reflections on the political situation in Russia, “Humor is a very important component. You can’t survive in Russia without it.” (p.67)

Do persistent jokes signal, then, that the all-too familiar totalitarianism is not completely dead? Are irony and humor once again being used as rhetorical armor? And

why can't one survive in Russia without humor (assuming Tolstaya is right) if one is an editorialist in a prominent national newspaper? My analysis suggests that irony serves a different purpose these days. Although humor once provided an escape route out of the straightjacket of the official idiom, it has lost its liberating potential and now works against the democratizing process. Presenting politics and politicians in a humorous light and ceaselessly poking jokes, editorialists lower the status of those officials in public eyes and judge their activities as being of little importance. They signal that politics does not require serious work; instead, a fair amount of wit is all that one needs to solve matters that politicians ponder about. This, of course, is not to say that jokes have no place in democratic politics. Instead, my argument points out that humorous editorials can effectively distance the audience from the political realm. For publics under totalitarian regimes, an escape provided by jokes is a desirable outcome. For a public aspiring to be democratic, falling out of touch with political leaders is detrimental.

Diametrically opposite effects of political humor are rooted in the joking 'mechanism' itself. As the incongruity theory of humor explains, at the core of a joke is a shift in perspectives that lets participants in on a joking ritual to see the world in a different light, even if for a brief moment. But to understand a joke, one has to understand the normal order of things. Jokes depend on the normal order; that is their parasitical nature, so to speak (Critchley, 2002). Jokes need a rule they can break. Or, to use Mary Douglas's terminology (1966), matter must be "in place" the majority of the time for "matter out of place" to be remarkable (cited in Warner 2007, p. 26). If one follows contemporary Russian editorials, politics becomes matter out of place most of the

time and shifting perspectives - a norm rather than an occasional disruption of order. A similar conclusion about Russian politics was reached by political scientist Lilia Shevtsova (2007), who noted that politics in Russia and its major elements (political parties, parliament, the judiciary, the media, and opposition) “have been intentionally and completely disoriented” (p. 319).

The power of humor to de-familiarize matters and to present them in a new light does not work toward creating more solidarity among editorialists and the public. Stuart Hall (1997) once argued that incongruity can have a negative effect because its attractiveness is linked to what is “forbidden, taboo, threatening to the cultural order” (p.237). By all appearances, jokes in Russian editorials have acquired that negative charge. They create a moment of recognition among the audience that the existing political order is not carved in stone but that recognition does not set the audience free because the joking party that is “structuring fun” (as Simon Critchley (2002) labels this process) does not side with the people. Even though editorials freely fire remarks that target the powerful, they play the cards that the regime has dealt. The current regime does not turn militant against joking to boost its power. Instead, it seems to have come to a conclusion that joking does not urge people to take to the streets in protest against authorities at whom they can laugh. As Zizek (1989) reminds us, “in contemporary societies, democratic or totalitarian, that cynical distance, laughter, irony, are, so to speak, part of the game. The ruling ideology is not meant to be taken seriously or literally” (p.28). Old regimes feared jokes and subsequently lost. The new one use them to manage public emotions.

Humor in Russian editorials inhabits a space barren of public debates on such issues as human rights, democratic freedoms, political programs, and similar topics. Jokes about politicians dis-locate “political matter,” but they do not put forward an argument about policies, nor do they represent a political position. Instead of working out a comprehensive perspective, humorous editorials create a happy mood, inoculating the public from questioning and probing any further. Thus, by embracing irony, funny editorials help the reading public (and society at large) slip into an all too familiar stagnation characterized by “a lack of robust, systematic thinking, cynicism, and a general rejection of a search for meaning and a mission” (Shevtsova, 2003).

DISCUSSION

Exploring the causes of disintegration in democracies, Nancy Bermeo (2003) came to a conclusion that when democratic regimes “fall on hard times,” their collapse is ensured “only if actors deliberately disassemble them and the key actors in this disassembling process are political elites” (p. 234). Neither excusing passivity of the masses nor praising their activism, Bermeo’s analysis of over a dozen cases of democratic demise around the globe has shown that democracies are brought down by their political elites, not by passive or hyper-demanding citizens.

Bermeo is not alone in pointing to a crucial role of elites in establishing and dismantling democratic regimes. But the myths of apathetic masses detrimental to the well-being of democracy are supported by a small cottage industry of citizen disengagement studies. Predictions regarding Russian democracy have been interwoven with mythical strands as well. Russian sociologists Kutkovets & Klyamkin (2005), for

instance, draw the attention of the scholarly community to the incompatibility of the conventional image of the Russian public with its image emerging from numerous surveys. A wide-spread opinion of Russians as apathetic, deeply conservative, god-bearing people in need of “guidance and parental oversight,” are “very vaguely” connected to values and views held by survey respondents, found Kutkovets & Klyamkin (p. 52). In fact, the Russian population largely rejects the traditionalist culture type. With these new subjects on the scene, argue Kutkovets and Klyamkin, the old myths are constantly being revived to compensate for elites’ inability to manage the nation. “In Russia, there is no elite adequate to the new qualities of the people,” they conclude rather straightforwardly (p.56). Lilia Shevtsova (2007) expresses a similar conviction: “The Russian elite is trying desperately to keep society in a state of drowsy oblivion, both by playing on its subconscious, reactivating old myths, and by not allowing the demons of the past to die. It is the Russian elite that is incapable of performing in a context of political pluralism, which is the principle force keeping Russia in its current deadlock” (p.296). Radical as her writing sounds, it unfortunately has as its backdrop the same old image of passive, ordinary folks. “We should not overstate the maturity of ordinary Russians or their ability to follow the rule of law,” warns Shevtsova; “they are still politically inactive and seem incapable of coming together to force the regime to take their interests into account” (p.295). In the same vein, Mariia Ordzhonikidze (2008) reports “observable deterioration of Russians’ attitudes toward the West and its basic values” and attributes it to “the Russian elite’s inadequate (if not absent) efforts to promote Russia’s assimilation of European values” (p.26). However, she explains those

inadequate efforts not by elites' poor leadership but by the "growing political passivity among Russians" (p. 28-29) that stands in the way of conducting a "more Westernized policy."

My analysis of editorials spots additional nuances in this trend in Russian public life. Elite discourse does not resonate with most informed and active members of the public; it pursues a separate agenda and contributes to a climate of disempowerment. Lay voices (as they are heard via letters to the editors) reveal a public that is more informed, more confident, more politically motivated, and more engaged and that stands in contrast to the skeptical, order-craving, and politically apathetic population circulating in elite conversation.

A split between elites and the masses is not a new discovery for Russia. Assumptions of a communist ideological uniformity, a view that colored many reports on Russia, dissolved fairly quickly after the Soviet regime collapsed. Survey research conducted in the mid-1990s already reported the gap between Russian elites and masses. Although Miller et al (1995) and Reisinger et al (1996)¹¹ found a more-than-expected measure of similarity between the attitudes of masses and elites in Russia and a subscription by both groups to democratic ideals, the masses showed more consistency in their beliefs than did the elites. Miller et al explained this surprising finding by the lack of institutions and arrangements to promote consistent attitudes among elites. How the masses – living under the same undemocratic institutions – managed to grow so consistent in their beliefs remained a mystery, as did an explanation for why the

¹¹ These two studies used the same data set for their explorations.

experience of undemocratic institutions produced such remarkably different effects in the two groups.

Gibson (1997b) added another piece to the puzzle. His findings that the Russian masses are more pro-democratic than elites questioned a widespread cliché that Russians are not cut out for democracy, that a major obstacle to consolidation of democratic transformations in Russia is the “unwillingness” of the masses to “put up with the cacophony” of democracy (p.271). “It is not so much the short fall of democratic values in the mass public that should be of concern,” warned Gibson, “but instead the degree to which political elites can agree to compete for political power through the ordinary (or orderly) mechanisms of democracy.” If elites maintain orderly political competition, contended Gibson, “it is likely that the mass public will maintain individual liberty, and democracy in Russia will prosper accordingly” (p.287).

From Gibson’s (1997b) conclusion onward, the theme of elites’ betrayal has been gaining visibility in Russia’s democratization studies. Shlapentokh (1999) pointed out the omission of public opinion data in speeches by Russian politicians and offered two explanations for this peculiarity: (1) reluctance on the part of the leaders to cite data that (until then) were unfavorable to them and (2) on a more alarming note, the elitist disgust for the masses. Shlapentokh’s observations led him to a claim that

... the major political forces in Russia seem completely immune to the voice of the people. They look upon the masses as an ever mutable thing, a population that endures rather than rebels, obeys the current political authority, and even votes for

it. In their opinion, the fate of the country has always been determined by the politicians in downtown Moscow... (p. 458).

A dozen years after the start of political reforms in Russia, researchers continue to register irreconcilable differences (as those are perceived by the natives) between Russian elites and the masses. As White's (2005) focus group participants made clear, not only does the theme of a "chasm between regime and society" appear time and time again, but it almost has boiled down to a formula to describe their political world: "people are all by themselves and authorities/government/regime/elites are by themselves as well" (p. 1137).

However, in their feelings of disempowerment, Russians are not very different from the citizens of other nations. Says Stephen White (2005):

It is, of course, universal that the interests of ordinary citizens are not fully reflected in the actions of government, and adult citizens in other countries do not necessarily exaggerate their influence. In the United Kingdom, for instance, 54% think 'people like me have no say' in the making of government decision¹²; in the United States 42% take the same view.¹³ (p. 1132)

An element that makes the difference here is the belief, promoted by Russian elites, that democracy has already been established in Russia and that the democratic project has been completed. As a result, they do not orient ordinary Russians toward renewing democracy, let alone perfecting it. But democracy as a completed project is a contradiction in terms. As Derrida once said, democracy should always remain in the

¹² A survey of 2001

¹³ NES 2004

state of “democracy to come.” The concept does have a neutral, constitutive, institutional part to it which, fortunately, does not exhaust it. The remaining part is performative (Noval, 2007). In this sense, democracy “functions as a call – a call to action and engagement – and not as an infinite deferral,” explains Noval, evoking an Althusserian notion of interpellation (p.146). Because it is a call, it fulfills its function when it is answered. So democratic citizens need to learn how to tell this call from all others and how to answer it in a way that established them as democratic citizens.

Of course, becoming democrats is not an easy task. Given the incompleteness of democracy, its perfection may well be a never-ending process both for individuals and for communities. It is also a process loaded with paradoxes that Jean-Jacques Rousseau noticed about an “emerging” people: “men would have to be prior to the laws what they ought to become by means of laws” (cited in Connolly, 1995, p.138). Measuring the adherence of Russians to democratic ideals, and their identification (or a lack thereof) with democrats, it is easy to forget that qualities of a democratic subject have been deduced “retroactively” (Noval, 2007, p. 184). Therefore, subjects that now seem to occupy their “sedimented” positions as a result of their participation in daily life may still be open to change and new social and political roles. But in order to perform democracy, they must keep the promise of it on the horizon like an order “to come,” constantly attempted and always uncertain.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Walt Whitman lived to cope with many persistent paradoxes, among which were his own views of democracy. On the one hand, convinced that democratic engagements are the “the highest forms of interaction between men,” Whitman glorified the virtues of a democratic society (Jensen, 2002). On the other hand, he referred to the American public as crude, superstitious, and plainly rotten members of a public that did not stand up to the democratic promise. How could one person simultaneously harbor such opposing feelings toward American democracy and its people? The answer, suggested Jensen, lay in the distinction between the ideal and the actual, between what is and what should be, between the people (the American citizenry) and ‘The People’ (the ideal of a democratic public). Believing in The People that should be, Whitman was not blind to the imperfections of the people he saw around him, all those “loudmouths, bores, and fanatics” who make, according to Peters (1999), the “weak link” (p.106) in conversational democracy.

A hundred years after Whitman’s time, Karin Wahl-Jorgensen (2007) observed the democratic practices of contemporary American journalists only to discover a similar dynamic at work. Aspiring to create a genuine public forum, editors of the newspapers she studied regularly dismissed some letter-writers as “insane,” revealing in so doing the gap between their vision of the ideal democratic conversation and the actual bits of communication presented to them (p.157). Explains Wahl-Jorgenson:

As they go about providing the conditions for public discourse, they don't like what they see. Even if they know that crazies and gun nuts who fill the mail bags are not representative of the public, they do not receive any better form of public opinion, and this frustrates them and leads to their denunciation of letter writers.

The gap between a vision of an ideal public and the behavior of real people is not specific to the American democracy. Frustration with the imperfect workings of democratic rule is even more palpable in emerging democracies. Russia, for one, is the place where the realities of democratization and its ideal are notoriously distant. Official promises to fix things in 500 days or so departed from reality at the speed of light almost immediately after the start of the Russian reforms. The president who campaigned under the banner of 'democracy' later gave orders to shell the parliament when his attempts to push through a constitution giving him excessive power met resistance. Another leader, aspiring to strengthen the state, to eliminate corruption, and to make the government work, established a highly personalized, authoritarian rule. Although elections are now held regularly and although individual freedoms have expanded in Russia, standards of living have plummeted for many groups. Markets protect the rich, corruption soars, and less policing in general has spawned a higher crime rate. Under these circumstances, it is little wonder that numerous surveys of Russian political attitudes continuously find that many citizens draw a line between the concept of democracy (*voobsche* [in general]) and what passes for democracy on the ground (*kak u nas* [like we have it]).

I began this project because the official explanations of how things are going in Russia often did not match what I saw happening on the ground. Buzzwords of

democracy and market reforms do not roll off official lips with the same ease as they did a couple of years ago although the ideal of democracy has not been turned down entirely. Daily life is no longer about shortages of consumer goods, power outages, and discontinued municipal services, but campaign rhetoric continues to focus on a looming crisis. People are vocal in their disapprovals of government policies but they do not rebel when their recently gained freedoms are being reduced. They still agree that democracy is the best way to organize the government, but they do not see it as being embraced in Russia. With my project, I wanted to find out whether it is possible to bridge the gap between the democratic ideal and Russian reality. At a minimum, I wanted to find out what prevented Russia from becoming truly democratic. Having seen distortions and lies in Russian politics during my life, I believed that communication between leaders and the people was a good point to start my inquiries and that communication between them can be a key factor in getting Russia back on the democratic track. I could not accept at face value the argument that Russia's history was its destiny, that its totalitarian past put unmovable roadblocks in the way of a different – let alone, better – life. With a bit of faith, I hoped that when elites and ordinary people talked to each other, improvements could be made. If democratic practices demand more openness, more collaboration, and more genuine attention to the concerns of ordinary people, they can be trusted to create new rhetorical situations that will compel speakers and writers to adopt new personas, envision their audiences in novel ways, and pursue goals previously thought unattainable. I suspected that the story of democratization was incomplete unless a discursive comment could be added to it. I believed that to complete that story, both elites and masses should

be heard. I also believed that spaces for meaningful communication between elites and the masses are not hard to find. So I picked the mass media as a venue for listening to their talk and to observe their interactions.

Indeed, my study has shown that a lot can be learned by listening to public conversation. Elaborating on the metaphor of a public forum, I looked at letters to the editor in Chapter Four to learn about participants, discursive practices and changes in the genre that coincided with political transformations. I discovered that many Russians enjoy expressing their opinions, that they are argumentative and engaging, even though their repertoire of political voices is rather small and their discussions are gradually sliding toward trivial matters. My analysis also revealed a worrisome trend of judgmental discourse in which one advances one's own argument while describing opposing views as wrong, misinformed, or otherwise inappropriate. These tendencies shape letters' pages that were less inclusive, less tolerant, and more elitist than the democratic public forum calls for. But they also created a public that was straightforward in speaking their mind, attentive to public affairs, watchful over their fellow-citizens, and convinced that their stories should be heard. In other words, the public forum in Russian newspapers seemed to be functioning, but not in accordance with the rules of rational debate proposed by Jurgen Habermas.

In Chapter Five, I examined the discourse of Russian elites through the genre of newspaper editorials, looking for signs of alteration as political situations changed. The texts revealed several surprises. I found that Russian editorialists were mesmerized by politics but did not sing the government's praises, that they presented the political world

as orderly and structured and envisioned their readers as ironic bystanders instead of committed activists. My analysis also showed that being freed of the strict control of the Communist party during the past decade, editorials had become less proselytic and less persistent in properly framing the current political situation. Poorly equipped to promote a true exchange of opinion, Russian editorials came across as critical or even cynical, a tone that may help newspapers sell a few copies but that can also alienate the citizenry.

In Chapter Six, I juxtaposed the two genres as a ‘call’ and a ‘response,’ working from a metaphor of the interpellated subject, and discovered that letter-writers were more politically outspoken than the audience imagined by the editorialists. Aligning the properties of the ‘call’ with those of the ‘response,’ I found that editorials largely bypassed the audience of letter-writers, that the two genres pursued different agendas, and that the extreme use of humor undermined editorials’ persuasiveness. Moreover, my observations suggested that conflicting properties of editorial ‘calls’ might disorient a prospective audience and discourage activism in public life, leading an emerging democratic subject into a political standstill. Together, my findings concluded that ordinary Russians are rarely summoned either to renew democracy or to improve upon it. Consequently, they rarely identify themselves as true democrats.

Compared to assessments of Russian political transformation produced by prior research, my account of discursive change both supports and runs counter to the diagnosis of the current regime as a managed or false democracy. Overall, it dovetails with the statement by Richard Rose that Russia is “democratic and disorderly,” but it cautions against viewing ordinary people as the sole source of that disorder. Instead, my

study offers a more nuanced reading of a “democratic and disorderly” verdict. It shows that democratic institutions in emergent democracies may be run via undemocratic practices and thus produce undemocratic outcomes.

The Freedom House annual surveys evaluate global freedom as experienced by individuals and produce ranking of various countries in two broad categories: political rights and civil liberties. The first concerns participation in the political process (voting, competing for public office, joining political parties, etc.), while the second accounts for freedoms of expression and belief, associational rights, rule of law, as well as personal autonomy. By the Freedom House standards, Russia has never risen to the ranks of a free country and its freedoms have been steadily declining during the twelve years examined in this study. Its highest moment occurred right before the Soviet Union collapsed, thanks to the policies of perestroika and glasnost launched in the mid-1980s. Since then, the country’s ratings went downhill consistently. Until 2004, Russia had kept company with partly-free countries, gradually losing points as it experienced corruption, discrimination, wars, unfair elections, and one-party dominance, although individuals could still organize quasi-political groups in an attempt to influence the government. In non-free states, in whose camp Russia moved in 2004, political systems are ruled by military juntas, one-party dictatorships, religious hierarchies, or autocrats, allowing only a minimal manifestation of political rights and civil liberties but sometimes compensating for the relative lack of freedom via the use of consultation bodies, tolerance of some political discussion, or acceptance of some forms of political action. Currently, the Freedom House experts find Russia suffering from corruption, restrictions of parties, overly strong

presidential power, and infringements on the freedom of speech. The day after the Russian parliamentary election of 2007 that brought a sweeping victory to the pro-Kremlin United Russia party, Freedom House reported the vote as “deeply flawed.” Its press release read:

The stark deterioration of political rights in Russia has resulted in a system where no opposition force can play by the rules and compete for political power,” said Freedom House executive director Jennifer Windsor. “In addition to short-charging ordinary Russians through this rigged process, these zero-sum politics are a prescription for instability (Freedom House, December 3, 2007).

The study of Russian democratization I conducted here by means of discourse analysis does not mirror the downslide Freedom House ratings have imagined. My data show that from 1996 to 2000, Russian public discourse as it is found in the newspapers was reviving and developing features of a free forum: the range of discussible topics was expanding, social distance was shortening, officialese was on the way out, and the genuine expression of a public mind was finding favor. Discursive data also turned out to be more sensitive to the turn toward less democratic practices and registered it at an earlier point. A red flag of infringements on the public sphere went up on the discursive terrain while the Freedom House indicators registered an extended plateau in Russian political development. Although this discrepancy in indicators is likely to stem from the locus of attention - laws regulating public space and conversation possible in public space constrained by those laws – discourse seems to provide a more accurate estimate of the democratic character of the public sphere. In what follows, I will discuss the implications

of the findings presented earlier for the theory and practice of democratization and I will then outline prospects for future studies.

LESSONS LEARNED

My explorations of discursive change during the time of Russia's allegedly failed democratic transition revealed that some practices thought of as a staple of the democratic public sphere, such as readers' correspondence in newspapers used to generate public discussion, have been present in Russian public discourse continually despite the gloomy reports of a democratic decline. Their presence suggested two possibilities: (1) either the public forum in Russia is indeed a happily overlooked pocket of freedom or (2) the discursive form does not match its content and is put to multiple uses, including non-democratic ones. In a truly Russian move, I discard both options. As with other institutions (for instance, elections), the existence of a public forum alone does not guarantee the quality of a discussion or its democratic character. Letters to the editor exist under different political regimes, but they do not necessarily advance a democratic course. It is the political practices unfolding within those public spaces that really matter. In my data, discussions among letter-writers exhibited formal qualities similar to qualities of public discussion elsewhere: participants respond to each other, they put forward arguments, they offer solutions to problematic situations. When examined more closely, however, these discussions reveal a tangled knot of discursive processes, some of which are associated with the development of an open forum while others actually work against that goal.

Several features surfacing in my texts - social distancing, trivialization of the discussion, and expressions of distrust of the people – were becoming more prominent as democracy’s standing in Russia was getting shakier. Social distancing, a marker of changes in relationships among political actors (proposed by Richard Anderson as one of the core indicators of democratic character of a given political regime), was increasing at the same time as political and civic freedoms in Russia were starting on a downward trajectory. The two developments captured by different measurements – language of social distancing and diminishing freedoms – should be seen here as complementary rather coincidental. While the Freedom House surveys evaluated political space structured by laws and regulations, my analysis tackles discursive practices unfolding in the space created by the aforementioned laws and regulations. That is, more restrained space invites a more restrained, distancing language.

Another feature getting more prominent over time was trivialization of public discussion. If democracy is the rule of the people, it matters what people are talking about when they communicate with each other about public matters. Although it can be (and has been) argued that political discussion can occur on topics of different magnitudes, a reservation to the level of the local and the personal and avoidance of discussions of grander matters is more likely to result from arbitrary barriers that are put up to prevent too much scrutiny on the parts of members of the public than from general satisfaction with how those grander matters are managed. If people do not see tangible results from public conversation, if their deliberations are ignored by policy-makers, they might refrain from discussing political issues. However, trivialization of public discussion is a

course that can fall on advanced democracies as well. Some blame it on the growing entertaining component in media content, connecting lower voter turnout with an increase in infotainment, and the media's unwillingness to remind their customers to be citizens. Others go deeper in their analysis and uncover the predatory capitalism shaping contemporary public communication (McChesney, 1999; Herman & Chomsky, 1988). My study cannot speak to the causal relationship between the trivialities discussed in Russian newspapers and the political behavior of the Russian people. Even though in their letters Russians are reluctant to discuss major political issues, they still show up at the polls in amazing numbers (over 60 percent in 2004 presidential elections). My observations of their discussions over a period of 12 years suggest that in the eyes of the Russian public politics remains an important topic. Russians may avoid talking politics in the conventional arenas; they may follow the media's lead and pick up more personal/local topics for their public discussions; they may even talk politics in oblique ways. As the political realm continues to be fenced off from day-to-day interactions, their informal political talk may now occur in forms and places that previous research has not yet recognized. As Shevchenko (2001) found in the aftermath of 1998's financial crisis, Russians continue to be alienated by state politics and they deliberately avoid becoming more informed about political and business elites and their activities. Yet, when they do venture out to talk politics, they talk passionately and extensively.

One of the most alarming findings in my study was the frequent expression of distrust of (the) people. Together with social distancing, it signals not a mere pulling away from public life but also the atomization of individuals, a trend that can potentially

undermine collaboration and political participation. Earlier, political scientists found a high degree of distrust among the Russian population (Mishler & Rose, 1997, 2001b; Lovell, 2001) and attributed it to the malignant legacy of communism. Communism, stated Lovell, “produced active mistrust in the institutions of government, whether because of official hypocrisy or official corruption” (p.33). The remedy was seen in leadership, in the new roles that politicians must establish as the people’s representatives. Twenty years after the start of perestroika, no institution in Russia can garner more than 40 to 50 percent of the nation’s trust (Shlapentokh, 2006). Although this lack of confidence in (imperfect) institutions is understandable, distrust of one’s fellow-citizens is threatening to erode the nation ‘from within,’ so to speak. On a brighter note, Bahry & Wilson (2004) found that in transitional societies (for which they took republics from the Russian Federation), a low level of generalized trust does not affect trust in strangers, which appears to be improving.

Existing theories of political behavior provide conflicting explanations for the origins of trust and offer diverging predictions about its effects (Mishler & Rose, 2001b, p.55). Yet, political scientists’ models and measurements lead them to believe that “close-knit ties with family and friends ... did not and could not spill over or up to create trusted institutions” under the Communist regime (p.56). On this ground, they discard interpersonal trust and take up institutional trust as a predictor of democratic stability. My objection to that argument is that interpersonal trust measured within a family overlooks a person’s public life where s/he has to work, collaborate, compromise, run errands, and accomplish a variety of tasks. Trust in people who are not among one’s immediate family

and friends is important for sustaining the groups and associations that make up civil society. It is also important for the successful performance of institutions like parliaments, courts, schools, banks, the army and the like which are run by the people of different political stripes, gender, ethnicity, education, etc., persons who must have some degree of trust in each other if they are to work side by side and keep these institutions functioning. My findings suggest that a starting point for nurturing and integrating both types of trust – institutional and interpersonal – might lie in learning what others have to say instead of blindly attacking their arguments and winning the shouting game when conflict arises.

Overall, the picture of Russian political life that emerged from my observations of the discursive terrain does not appear as bleak and hopeless as the one presented either by Freedom House or by Andrew Wilson (2005). Wilson sees lazy elites and cynical and passive masses as endemic to Russia. In contrast, I discovered masses who were interested in politics but who were fed passivity myths about themselves and their fellow citizens. I agree with Wilson that Russian elites want the public “to be sufficiently disengaged to give it a free hand, but sufficiently engaged to give the impression of popular support” (p.272) and that they marshal enormous resources to accomplish that goal. I also agree with him that, in Russia, “the public performance of politics” should not be taken at face value. However, I disagree with him about the longevity of the public deception he espies. Although Wilson acknowledges that the extent to which people can be conned is exaggerated, he deems it inevitable that the Kremlin, having become so good at “fixing elections” (p.266), has consolidated its hold on political power for years

to come. I, on the other hand, believe that “the sheer trickery” of Russian politicians and their advisors and consultants (p.268) has its limits, that real politics can be brought back to Russia although that endeavor will require enormous efforts in coordinating institutions, ideas, people, and the political practices.

IMPLICATIONS

I started this dissertation puzzling over the discursive theory of democracy proposed by Richard Anderson. On the one hand, it offered an attractive cross-section of a democratizing polity. On the other hand, the two crucial components of democratization which Anderson's account identifies - a switch in the political language to the vernacular and a change of social identities from subjects to citizens – appeared to be locked within two different groups. Language change was expected to occur with the political elites, while the identity shift was thought to affect the ordinary people, the ruled. Why would democratization be manifested so differently for these two groups? Could the rulers change their vocabulary but preserve the rest of their habits?

My study produced mixed support for Anderson's propositions. Indicators of social distance signaled - quite reliably - changes in the Russian political climate, increasing when political freedoms were being infringed upon and diminishing when they were supported. Also, rhetorical personas chosen by letter-writers and editorialists reflect the degree of openness in public discourse: when free expression of opinion was welcomed, people felt encouraged to stand alone and exercise their own political voice; when freedoms got curtailed, their statements became more impersonal. Yet, the two groups - elite and lay – exhibited differential sensitivity to democratic roll-backs:

ordinary letter-writers, not editorialists, reacted to a rise of authoritarianism by reviving patterns once prevalent in the Soviet political language. These findings pointed to the need to expand the discursive theory of democratization and to focus increased attention on vernacular discourse as well.

I also observed processes that Anderson's theory had not predicted. His was a prescriptive view of language. He seemed to believe that, in a very strict sense, language creates the world, that a distancing language will drive communicative partners apart and that a democratic language will ignite changes in the political system. The theory also assumed that one's language always matches one's political identity, that the rulers always 'sound' differently from the ruled. Premised on the gap between the language of the rulers and the language of the ruled, the theory cannot explain cases where the two share a common language but are kept apart by power relations. Such is the case in the Russian language where a common stock of political metaphors depicts a very segregated political world, placing authorities on top and the people at the bottom, with very few links connecting the two. In light of such a political configuration, Anderson's prescription for fostering democracy by bringing the language of politicians closer to the language of the masses does not make much sense. The two groups are already on the same wavelength, and both understand all too well how the Russian political world operates. What might get them out of this rut is some sort of reframing, a departure from the old conceptual grid, a fresh look at the political world and their roles in it.

In addition to amendments to Anderson's theory, my findings about the discourse of ordinary people speak to key debates in political science: the role of informal

talk/conversation/dialog in a democracy and the impact of public discussion on political participation in particular. According to several prominent theorists, democracy has a future only if “citizens come back out of the bunkers and start talking” (Gray, 1995, p.1). Yet, not every type of citizenly conversation contributes to democratic progress. Some scholars (Tonn, 2005; Welsh 2002) have noted that open-endedness and the lack of structure in conversation make it inadequate for re-articulating issues, for moving the discussion forward, and for coming to conclusions. On the basis of her work, Walsh (2004) also cautioned against the dark side of political talk. Despite its clear benefits to people who “see the relevance of their private lives to public concerns” (p.181), when it is left to itself, warns Walsh, informal talk easily becomes intolerant, exclusive, and sets up (or reinforces) social boundaries (p.182). Diana Mutz's (2006) work casts an even darker cloud over compatibility between democratic participation and democratic deliberation. Her study led her to conclude that

...the best social environment for cultivating political activism is one in which people are surrounded by those who agree with them, people who will reinforce the sense that their own political views are the only right and proper way to process. Like-minded people can spur one another to collective action and promote the kind of passion and enthusiasm that are central to motivating political participation.

In other words, an extremely activist political culture is unlikely to be a "heavily deliberative" one (p.3). Social environments that expose people to different views, says Mutz, may “promote” an exchange of political ideas but they are “unlikely to foster

political fervor” (ibid).

These studies fly in the face of the most cherished feature of a democratic conversation - diversity of opinion. For a long time, the quality of public discussion has been said to depend on the variety of views represented in it. “Democratic public discourse,” stated Calhoun (1992), “does not depend on the pre-existing harmony or similarity among citizens... but rather on the ability to create meaningful discourses across lines of difference” (p.8). Thus, two elements are crucially important to making democratic discourse what it is: the presence of differences and their treatment. While differences have been widely discussed, their handling has attracted less attention. Yet, exposure to different viewpoints cannot alone produce a democratic public, not to mention political activists, as Mutz has demonstrated. A truly democratic discourse is premised on “taking advantage of the clash of perspectives” in order to re-articulate the issue under consideration (Heidelbaugh, 2008, p.29) and to release tensions produced by differences in the process of creating new meanings. By contrast, authoritarian discourse is not interested in reconciling differences and releasing tensions. It knows other, more coercive, means by which to resolve conflict.

By all appearances, public spaces - such as media fora - do not necessarily advance democracy just because they exist, attract a sizable congregation, and encourage its members to talk. Expressions of opinion and sharing of personal experiences are attractive options after a long period of silence. Poor skills in handling differences and reconciling opposing positions make it hard to transform readers' fora from spaces for airing grievances and sharing anecdotes into a democratic public sphere that can help

resolve conflicts in non-violent, that is, discursive, ways.

This study also contributes to a discussion in the field of *journalism and mass media* about the media's role in democratization. The traditional approach to the media sees them as securing free access to information, thus making them indispensable to democracy (Berman & Witzner, 1997). Accordingly, the mass media are viewed as the principal institutions that foster debate in which "diverse positions are advanced, significant opinions are heard, interests and inner-workings are exposed, and input is received" (Curran, 1991). The media's capacities to perform these roles inspired some scholars to call them the "connective tissue of democracy" (Gunther & Mughan, 2000). Thus, an analysis of the Russian media-scape, of the rules and regulations that structure it, and of the relationships between the state, media organizations, and journalists could provide valuable insight into the current state of democratic reforms, especially since the growing authoritarian tendencies in Russian politics treat the media as a central point of contention.

The work presented above taps into a layer underlying the media's functioning as a "connective tissue." That is, average citizens, as multiple studies have found, are neither active consumers of information nor consistent political participants (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1991). Yet, when they do act as good democratic citizens, they are often "at the mercy" of the media who "determine how issue debates and policy alternatives will be structured and defined" (Callaghan & Schnell, 2001, p. 183). Examining how ordinary people use the media, and how they adapt the media to their needs, is central to understanding how the public connects to politics and how political

institutions work. In other words, in showing how the public makes use of the media (more specifically, of how the Russian public uses the letters' pages and makes sense of them), I attempted to capture the shape of Russian political institutions. I noted that having gained from openness, people speak their minds more willingly and more honestly. But they also have "retained" skills developed in the Soviet times, such as reading between the lines, filtering propaganda, and peppering their texts with proper citations. Being "extraordinarily sophisticated media consumers" (Mickiewicz, 1999), Russians revised their discursive repertoire as soon as the political environment signaled change and when political institutions began running the old scripts of governmental authority and command. Overall, the evidence that I presented in the previous chapters supports the intellectual call made by Nina Eliasoph (2004) some years ago: we need to theorize the public before we theorize the press, and, I would add, before we theorize the media's role in the process of democratization.

LIMITATIONS

Although my findings add to several important debates in the social sciences and have implications for the theory and practice of democratic reforms, the study is not without limitations. First, I explored only one pair of genres within one print medium. Patterns and strategies that I found might be specific to these genres only. Other genres, such as news reports, public speeches, interviews, and open mike sessions could reveal a different set of communicative strategies, although vernacular voices are notoriously difficult to find as they tend to be used in places that cannot easily be considered either 'in' or 'outside' of institutions themselves (Eliasoph, 2004).

Also, elite communication is represented in my dataset by editorials, a genre that many elite groups (politicians and business elites, for instance) do not engage. Politicians may address the public at a rally or in postings on their party's or their own websites. Intellectuals can address their remarks to ordinary people on radio or television. These calls interact with each other, reinforcing, contradicting, or canceling one another. My analysis assumed such interpellations but did not study them specifically. Although letter-writers in my sample frequently quoted TV personalities and discussed views expressed in television programs, I did not rule out letters that responded to messages from these sources. Instead, I treated them as part of the media in general, media often cued by the elites themselves.

Third, I did not superimpose my findings on the sociological reality of the writers or systematically compare them to attitudes registered among the Russian population by survey research. As in other places (Buell, 1975; Cooper, Knotts, & Haspel, 2009; Wober, 2004), letter-writing in Russia might be a practice popular among a very special group (male, more educated, older, Russian-speaking, urban, etc), reflecting their upbringing, age, gender, social status, income, and the like. It may be the case that Russian women are more critical than men, that nostalgic themes for the Soviet past come from younger people who never experienced life under Communist rule, or that distancing is the strategy of the underprivileged. Studies of vernacular voices that rely on data collected in other discursive domains and in other times could uncover unique patterns specific to those contexts that might or might not match those I discovered in the letters examined here.

Fourth, broadly framing the two parts of my project as a study in communication between elites and masses, I did not include campaign messages even though I collected texts that appeared in print during presidential elections. With the campaign looming in the background, some rhetorical strategies may have been overdetermined by it. The conspicuous absence of campaign-related discussions in the letters may be strategic as well. If so, it is likely to be a strategy of selection and placement on the parts of the editors, not a strategy of inattention by the letter-writers themselves. If more regular times had been considered (i.e., when the routine of governing vs. the anxieties of the campaign shaped the agenda at hand), communication between elites and masses might be manifested differently.

Finally, my data included neither regional nor local press. All the texts I examined came from national publications of long-standing reputation. Struggling to survive in the market-based economy, smaller newspapers may not carry readers' letters or might carry them irregularly, or they may consider only local issues, leaving discussions of national politics and the country's political future to authorities in Moscow. On the other hand, far away from the center, local journalists may publish letters that create more vibrant public fora, fora that are more critical or more diverse, than those possible in the national press itself.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This dissertation maps out a vast ground for future explorations. In the section that follows, I will outline several areas of inquiry and possible questions to expand the research reported above. The most immediate extension of this study is to explore

communication between elites and masses beyond the domain of newspapers and during the campaigning season. Russians reportedly distrust all political institutions except the presidency, but have they stopped petitioning authorities because of that? Has their prolific letter-writing diminished because (if one is to trust Freedom House's judgment) individual rights and freedoms have been infringed upon or is it increasing now as the "vertical of power" is being strengthened? If ordinary people contact their public officials, what kind of goals do they pursue? What strategies do they employ to achieve those goals? What do those strategies tell us about political opportunities, institutions, and civic participation in Russia? What other lines of communication and options for influencing the government are open for ordinary people? In what fashion do authorities respond to the citizenry if and when they do so? What challenges do courts, regional legislative assemblies, and non-governmental organizations face when communicating with the public? Do they invent new genres of governance and try out new formats or do they re-deploy the discursive repertoire from earlier times? Is their communication style indicative of a new authoritarianism that is being shaped in Russia? If so, in what ways does this new authoritarianism differ from the old one?

Prior work on the discourse of Soviet leadership identified a peculiar pattern of crisis communication. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia saw more than its fair share of catastrophes, natural disasters, and scandals: airplane crashes, hostage crises, terrorist bombing, corruption charges, assassinations, earthquakes, floods, oil and chemical spills, and the like. Is the current Russian leadership replicating the old patterns of communication or is it developing a more people-centered approach resembling crisis

responses used elsewhere, one requiring that clear and consistent information be provided to the affected population?

A future comparative project might ask whether other democratizing countries have experienced rhetorical development of the kind described here, shifting toward the vernacular speech when democracy is on the rise and signaling a growing distance from the masses when it wanes, encouraging dialogue and debate during good times and opting out for monologic discourse during difficult times. An intriguing study in elite-mass communication in the early days of (now-advanced) democracies can provide insight into a developmental history of democratic rhetoric, one that asks whether the trends noted here are culture-bound, whether they are characteristic of young democracies, or whether the observed features are marks of the age in which they were observed. For instance, even though the catchphrase of ‘managed democracy’ is a trademark of former president Putin, an influx of managerial rhetoric in politics is not specific to Russia. It has been reported to spread in Britain as well as in the U.S. Are there other cross-cutting maladies affecting public discourse regardless of a given country’s political regime?

Now that Russia is not populated by *sovetskii narod* [the Soviet people] any more, an exploration into political socialization is needed to document changes in patterns of political mobilization and civic education. The ordinary Soviet man praised in Soviet books, movies, textbooks, and political speeches can no longer be found. Is the new political subject in Russia a democratic one? If so, what characteristics does s/he share with democratic subjects raised elsewhere? Or, being uniquely Russian, does s/he differ from them in some fundamental ways? Depending on the result of that inquiry, a

typology of democratic subjects might be created to complement the corresponding stages of democratic development.

The letter-writers in my sample often claimed that there is no ideology in Russia today. Indeed, having been scorched by Marxism-Leninism, Russians declared in their 1993 constitution that there should not be any sort of official state ideology. So far, Russian leaders have not come up with a national idea to bring Russians together and to provide a vision for their future. Yet recent scholarship identified a rise of conservatism (Hamburg, 2005; Prozorov, 2005) and nostalgia for the Soviet past, most unexpectedly among Russian youth (Mendelson & Gerber, 2005-2006; Munro 2006). What immediate consequences do these developments have and what can be expected from them in the long run? Through what channels might those ideas be promoted? Where and with what appeals does the New Order recruit its followers and supporters?

Also, since only four political voices were discovered in the letters, a question about the repertoire of voices in Russia's broader public discourse must be asked. Prior work on letters in Soviet times found such highly exploited personas as mothers, orphans, old Bolsheviks, victims, and some others. What other voices are currently being heard? Has their repertoire changed over the past 15-20 years? What rhetorical personas have proved useful for participants in Russian public discourse across time?

As I mentioned in the section on limitations, in this study I looked only at printed letters and did not consider the total amount of correspondence that editorial offices work with when selecting items for letters' pages. Research on letters to the editor in the U.K. and the U.S. has produced alarming findings showing that editors re-shape public

conversation by weeding out letters that do not meet the newsroom's own standard of appropriateness. What kinds of letters are discarded in Russian newsrooms and on what grounds? How heavily are they edited and with what standards in mind? What goals do Russian editors pursue when publishing the letters? As my data show, the editors do not speak directly about a public forum. What vision do they follow, then? I also did not systematically report differences in rhetorical preferences among newspapers. An additional inquiry looking into choices of topics, styles, placement on a page, and similar matters may outline Russia's media landscape in greater detail by marking its democratic frontier and political backwaters.

Finally, this study focused on Russian discourse attempting to document rhetorical indicators of democratic changes. A legitimate follow-up question is: what does an anti-democratic rhetoric sound like? Some scholarship on anti-democratic argument already exists in political theory (Femia, 2001) but with democracy being promoted around the globe, it is both theoretically and practically important to know whether those arguments are time and place specific, whether they are culture-bound or regime-dependent, and whether their presence in public discourse is a sign of the robustness of democratic debate or a signal of democratic decay.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Russians, as Carnaghan (2007) has argued, may be "imperfect democrats," but the reason for that may well be the deeply flawed political institutions they live under and not their cultural heritage. In many respects, Russians' political behavior does not differ much from how citizens of long-standing democracies act. Russians show up at the

voting booth in large numbers, they accept the results of the elections, they criticize the government and public officials, and they give them plenty of time to improve policies, they create “too many political parties, not too few” (p.76). Their low trust in government is comparable with distrust in government expressed by people elsewhere in the world who are “distracted by the vagaries of daily existence” (ibid). What is important is that ordinary Russians “want to see democratic institutions improved, not dismantled” (p.73) and have provided little evidence that they are averse to democratic vitality. Instead, they have supplied considerable evidence that their immediate experience with poorly functioning institutions has shaped their political attitudes.

My study supports a similar conclusion. Democratic institutions in Russia – a restructured system of elections, courts, parliament, the media – have not generated democracy nor could they have since democracies are not made without effort. They require not only a set of rules and procedures but also a polity with democratic attitudes and beliefs. Democracies are run democratically, and social practices (including discursive ones) through which those institutions function really do matter. Institutions alone do not close the gaps between an ideal and an actual democracy. Instead, it takes a combination of institutions, ideas, and practices together to sustain a democratic way of life. Thus, the job of becoming democratic is not the exclusive job of the laity or the government. Both elites and masses must learn democratic ways and adopt democratic identities. To use Anderson’s idiom once again, a transition from subjects to citizens must occur with the rulers as well as with the ruled if a democracy is to take hold.

Skeptical about the uniqueness of Russia in its taste for paradoxes, I was interested in points of similarity between the Russian experience of democratization and descriptions of political change elsewhere. To a degree, I have found that Russian democrats are not completely unique. The quintessence of this romantic belief in Russia's exceptionalism was once expressed by the Russian poet and diplomat of the 19th century, Fyodor Tyutchev, in a verse that warned against "embracing Russia with one's mind" or "measuring it with a common yardstick." This image of an anomalous Russia is often brought up as a defense by natives and as a point of frustration by foreigners. Indeed, in the materials that I analyzed here, I saw enough commonalities to deny Russia the status of outlier. Given its level of economic development, Russia is doing well for a country that is going through a process of transformation and is restructuring all of its major institutions; more precisely, it is doing well in the company of Botswana and Venezuela. The problem is that Russians do not want to be placed in the company of Botswana and Venezuela. Memories of being a great country refuse to go away and they are fueled by Russian authorities who summon them forth whenever they have to justify some non-conventional policy decisions.

My observations of the residue of the Soviet Union's wooden language in today's public discourse in Russia highlighted some unexpected parallels. Specifically, such qualities of Soviet political rhetoric as the absence of debate and the expectations of a uniform response from an audience appear not to be uniquely Soviet. Scholars of early American rhetoric, for instance, have found similar features in Puritan rhetoric. Engaged in "hegemonic discourse," the name under which this type of discourse became known

later, Puritans often acted in an authoritarian manner. Commenting on Puritan preaching style, Kibbey (1986) has noted:

[Cotton] preached hopeless obedience to a systematic prejudice. His apparently expansive prophecy of the Puritans' millennial rule narrowed to be belief that there was only a single locus of meaning, only one space and time, only one social category with the authority to determine meaning: the Puritan elite (cited in Roberts-Miller, p.12).

The Soviet public sphere also resembled the Puritan one in being "violently exclusive" (Roberts-Miller, 1999) and being dependant on coercion even though neither was initially designed to operate according to those principles.

Because of the belief that everything is predetermined and that human beings themselves cannot control their lives, deliberation had no real place in Puritan discourse. There was God's way and Satan's way and no other. The Puritan audience was therefore split in two: those who knew and followed God's way (and therefore, did not need to be persuaded and/or converted) and sinners who could not be persuaded under any circumstances (Roberts-Miller, p.32). The Puritans' preference for monologue instead of dialogue as a major mode of communication "blunted" their efforts to create an open and inclusive public sphere, explains Roberts-Miller (p.43). Soviet public discourse stumbled at that same spot. Demonstrating the correctness of the Marxist interpretation of reality and the wrongness of all other interpretations, praising the Soviet way of life and condemning the capitalist, bourgeois West, recognizing only one honorable political

action – a fight for Communist ideas, not against them -- the Soviet rhetoric ended up in a formulaic desert, in a land of clichés suitable to conventions and not convictions.

Parallels between Puritan and Soviet rhetorics, while flattering to neither party, help explain the desire for a linear public discourse that frequently showed up in my data. Much like modern-day Russians, Puritans also saw language as dangerously powerful and yet utterly inadequate. They would feel threatened by a conventional insult but did not think that “a discursive answer would suffice” (Roberts-Miller, p.2). Contemporary Russians exhibit a similar mix of intolerance and awe of language in the public sphere. As their letters demonstrated, some of them still feel quite uncomfortable with ‘unsanctioned’ utterances or with remarks that break the norms of civility, for instance, or publications that contain harsh language or curse words. Only people who take public space and public conversation very seriously indeed would write objections to the editors when such disturbing materials find their way into print.

Pointing to these parallels between Puritan and Soviet public discourse hardly means that the Soviet people are new Puritans. But these observations do give support to a view that the rhetoric and political organization of a society go hand in hand, that all democratizing polities might go through similar phases when establishing their public spheres, and that the rhetorical features of a democracy may reflect its stage of political maturation. They also give some hope to the view that Soviet political rhetoric may not be an entirely crippling legacy after all and that Russian public discourse is not doomed to repeat such authoritarian patterns. In the same way that the Puritan public sphere was transformed into a more democratic space, the Russian sphere can become more open and

inclusive. Despite the Puritans' neglect of public dialogue and debate, other voices emerged in the American polity to move it beyond monologue, beyond intolerance, beyond the demands of certainty and the denial of contingency in public life. So there is hope and at least one happy precedent that the Russian public sphere will eventually reach the point at which it can be dubbed democratic, provided that we better understand what conditions - in Russia of the 21th century and in New England of the 17th century – open up the possibilities for a passionate and full-blown democratic discourse.

REFERENCES

- Afanas'ev, Iu. (2005). Power as end and means. *Russian Politics and Law*, 43 (6), 6-21.
- Alexander, J. (1997). Surveying attitudes in Russia: A representation of formlessness. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 30 (2), 107-127.
- Alexander, J. 2000. *Political culture in post-Communist Russia: Formlessness and recreation in a traumatic transition*. Macmillan Press: Basingstoke & London.
- Alexander, J., & Smith, P. (1993). The discourse of American civil society: A new proposal for culture studies. *Theory and Society*, 22, 151 -207.
- Alexopoulos, G. (2006). Soviet citizenship, more or less: Rights, emotions, and states of civic belonging. *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 7 (3), 487-528.
- Alexseev, M., & W. L. Bennett. (1995). For whom the gates open: News reporting and government source patterns in the United States, Great Britain, and Russia. *Political Communication* 12, 395-412.
- Allen, D.S. (2005). *Democracy, Inc. The press and law in the corporate rationalization of the public sphere*. Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Allen, J.M., & Faigley, L. (1995). Discursive strategies for social change: An alternative rhetoric of argument. *Rhetoric Review* 14 (1), 142-172.
- Altermeyer, B. (1996). *The authoritarian specter*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Althouse, M.T. (2001). Boris Yeltsin's ascent to power: Rhetorical roles and the end of the Soviet Union. *Communication Quarterly*, 49 (3), 295-309.

- Althusser, L. (1972). *Lenin and philosophy, and other essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Alvarez, M., Cheibub, J.A., Limongi, F. & Przeworski, A. (1996). Classifying political regimes. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 31 (2), 3-36.
- Alvarez-Caccamo, C. (1996). Building alliances in political discourse: language, institutional authority, and resistance. *Folia Linguistica* 30 (3-4), 245-270.
- Analiticheskie zhanry gazety: Khrestomatiia*. 1989. Moskva: Izdatelstvo MGU.
- Anderson, C., & Tverdova, Yu.V. (2003). Corruption, political allegiances, and attitudes toward government in contemporary democracies. *American Journal of Political Science*, 47 (1), 91-109.
- Anderson, P. (2007, January 25). Russia's managed democracy. *London Review of Books*, 29 (2), 3-12
- Anderson, R.D., Jr. (1996). 'Look at all those nouns in a row' – Authoritarianism, democracy, and the iconicity of political Russian. *Political Communication*, 13, 145-164.
- Anderson, R. D., Jr. (1997). Speech and democracy in Russia: Responses to political texts in three Russian cities. *British Journal of Political Science*, 27, 23-45.
- Anderson, R.D., Jr. (2001). Metaphors of dictatorship and democracy: Change in the Russian political lexicon and the transformation of Russian politics. *Slavic Review*, 60 (2), 312-335
- Anderson, R.D., Jr., Chervyakov, V.L., & Parshin, P.B. (1995). Words matter: Linguistic conditions for democracy in Russia. *Slavic Review*, 54 (4), 869-895.

- Anderson, R.D., Jr., Chervyakov, V.L., & Parshin, P.B. (1997). *Discourse and democratic participation: An investigation in Russia*. Retrieved from <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/anderson/repart2.htm>
- Anderson, R. D., Jr., Fish, M. S., Hanson, S.E. & Roeder, P.G. (Eds.). (2001). *Postcommunism and the theory of democracy*. Princeton, NJ, & Oxford UK: Princeton University Press.
- Androunas, E. (1993). *Soviet media in transition: Structural and economic alternatives*. Praeger: Westport CT & London.
- Ansary, H., & Babaii, E. (2005). The generic integrity of newspaper editorials: A systemic functional perspective. *RELC 36 (3)*, 271-295.
- Antaki, Ch. *Analyzing talk and text. Lecture/seminar 11: Varieties of discourse analysis II*. Retrieved from <http://www-staff.lboro.ac.uk/~ssca/ttlecture11DA2.htm>
- Antaki, Ch., Billig, M., Edwards, D., & Potter, J. (2003). Discourse analysis means doing analysis: A critique of six analytic shortcomings. *Discourse Analysis Online, 1(1)*. Retrieved from <http://extra.shu.ac.uk/daol/articles/v1/n1/a1/antaki2002002-paper.html>
- Appadurai, A. (2001). Deep democracy: Urban governmentality and the horizon of politics. *Environment and Urbanization 13 (2)*, 23-43
- Archibugi, D. (2005). The language of democracy: Vernacular or Esperanto? A comparison between the multi-culturalist and cosmopolitan perspectives. *Political Studies, 53*, 537-555.

- Aron, L. (2005). *Putin's risks*. Washington DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.
- Aron, L. (2006). *The United States and Russia: Ideologies, policies, and relations*. Washington DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.
- Aron, L. (2007). *Russia's revolution: Essays 1989-2006*. Washington DC: AEI Press.
- Asen, R., & Brouwer, D.C. (Eds.). (2001). *Counterpublics and the state*. Albany: State University New York.
- Åslund, A. & Olcott, M.B. (Eds.). (1999). *Russia after communism*. Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Åslund, A. (2004). The December 2003 and March 2004 election in Russia: A framing comment. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 45 (4), 280-284.
- Åslund, A. (2008). Putin's lurch toward tsarism and neo-imperialism: Why the United States should care. *Demokratizatsiya*, 16 (1), 17-25
- Aune, J.A. (2003) The argument from evil in the rhetoric of reaction. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 6(3), 518-522.
- Bacon, J. (1998). 'Do you understand your own language?' Revolutionary topoi in the rhetoric of African-American abolitionists. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 28 (2), 55-75.
- Bahry, D. (1993). Society transformed? Rethinking the social roots of perestroika. *Slavic Review*, 52 (3), 512-554.
- Bahry, D. (1999). Comrades into citizens? Russian political culture and public support for the transition. *Slavic Review*, 58 (4), 841-853.

- Bahry, D., & Silver B. (1990). Soviet citizen participation on the eve of democratization. *American Political Science Review*, 84 (3), 821-848.
- Bahry, D., & Wilson, R.K. (2004). Trust in transitional societies: experimental results from Russia. A paper presented at APSA, Chicago, September 2-5, 2004.
- Baker, P. (2006). *Using corpora in discourse analysis*. Continuum: London & New York.
- Baker, P., Gabrielatos, C., Khosravini, M., Krzyzanowski, M., McEnery, T., & Wodak, R. (2008). A useful methodological synergy? Combining critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to examine discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press. *Discourse & Society*, 19 (3), 273-306.
- Ball, T. (1988). *Transforming political discourse: Political theory and critical conceptual history*. Oxford & New York: Basil Blackwell.
- Ball, T., Farr, J., & Hanson, R.L. (Eds.). (1989). *Political innovation and conceptual change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Balzer, H. (2003). Managed pluralism: Vladimir Putin's emerging regime. *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 19 (3), 189-227.
- Balzer, H. (2005). Ordinary Russians? Rethinking August 1991. *Demokratizatsiya*, 13 (3), 193-218
- Barany, Z., & Moser, R.G. (Eds.). (2001). *Russian politics: Challenges of democratization*. Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press.
- Barber, B.A. (1998). *A passion for democracy: American essays*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Baviskar, S., & Malone, M.F.T. (2004). What democracy means to citizens – and why it matters. *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 76, 3-23.
- BBC Monitoring. (2008). *Russia: Country Profile*.
- Becker, J. (2004). Lessons from Russia; a neo-authoritarian media system. *European Journal of Communication*, 19 (2), 139-63.
- Becker, L.B., Tudor, V., & Nusser, N. (2007). An evaluation of press freedom indicators. *The International Communication Gazette*, 69 (1), 5-28.
- Beebee, T.O. (1994). *The ideology of genre. A comparative study of generic instability*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Beetham, D. (Ed.). (1994). *Defining and measuring democracy*. London, Thousand Oaks, & New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Beistegui, M., de. (2008). The erosion of democracy. *Research in Phenomenology*, 38, 157-173.
- Beliaev, M.V. (2006). Presidential powers and consolidation of new post-communist democracies. *Comparative Political Studies*. 39 (3), 375-398.
- Bellin, E. (2000). Contingent democrats: Industrialists, labor, and democratization in late-developing countries. *World Politics*, 52 (2), 175-205.
- Belmonte, I.A. (2009). Positioning the reader: A study on the use of interactive textual patterns in English written newspaper editorials and articles of opinion. *English Text Construction*, 2 (1), 48-69.
- Belmonte, I.A. (2007). Newspaper editorial and comment articles: A Cinderella genre? *Rael: Revista Electronica de Lingustica Aplicada*, 1, 1-9.

- Benhabib, S. (1999). Citizens, residents, and aliens in a changing world: Political membership in the global era. *Social Research*, 66 (3), 709-744.
- Benhabib, S. (Ed.). (1996). *Democracy and difference: Contesting the boundaries of the political*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Benn, D. (1996). The Russian media in post-soviet conditions. *Europe-Asia studies*, 48 (3), 471-479.
- Bennett, W. L. (1993). Constructing publics and their opinions. *Political Communication*, 10, 101-120.
- Bennett, W. L. (2003). *Civic learning in changing democracies: Challenges for citizenship and civic education* (Center for Communication and Civic Engagement Working Paper #4). Seattle: University of Washington.
- Bennett, W.L. (1975). Political scenarios and the nature of politics. *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 8, 23-42.
- Bennett, W.L. (1996). An introduction to journalism norms and representations of politics. *Political Communication*, 13, 373-384.
- Bennett, W.L. (1998). The uncivic culture: Communication, identity, and the rise of lifestyle politics. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 31 (4), 741-761.
- Benson, R. (2004). Bringing the sociology of media back in. *Political Communication*, 21, 275-292.
- Bentley, R. (2004). Rhetorical democracy. In B. Fontana, C.J. Nederman, & G. Remer (Eds.), *Talking democracy: Historical perspective on rhetoric and democracy* (pp.115-134). University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University.

- Berman, J., & Weitzner, D. (1997). Technology and democracy. *Social Research*, 64 (3), 1313-1321.
- Bermeo, N. (2003). *Ordinary people in extraordinary times: The citizenry and the breakdown of democracy*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bhatia, V.K., Flowerdew, J., & Jones, R.H. (Eds.). (2008). *Advances in discourses studies*. Routledge: London & New York.
- Bhatia, V.K. (1997). The power and politics of genre. *World Englishes*, 16 (3), 359-371.
- Bideleux, R. (2007). Making democracy work in the Eastern half of Europe: Explaining and conceptualizing divergent trajectories of post-communist democratization. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 8 (2), 109-130.
- Biesecker, B. (1992). Michel Foucault and the questions of rhetoric. *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, 25 (4), 351-364.
- Billig, M. (1995). Rhetorical psychology, ideological thinking and imagining nationhood. In H.Johnson & B. Klandermans (Eds.), *Social movements & culture* (pp.64-81). Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press.
- Biryukov, N. & Sergeev.V. (2004). *Stanovlenie institutov predstavitelnoj vlasti v sovremennoi rossii*. Moskva: Agenstvo izdatelski servis.
- Biryukov, N., Gleisner, J., & Sergeyev, V. (1995). The crisis of sobornost: parliamentary discourse in present-day Russia. *Discourse & Society*, 6 (2), 149-175.
- Blaug, R. (2002). Engineering democracy. *Political Studies*, 50, 102-116.
- Blitt, R. C. (2008). Babushka said two things- it will either rain or snow, it either will or will not: - an analysis of the provisions and human rights implications of Russia's

- new law on nongovernmental organizations as told through eleven Russian proverbs. Manuscript in preparation for *George Washington International Law Review* 40.
- Blomaert, J. (2000). Critical discourse analysis. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 29, 447-466. doi:10.1146/annurev.anthro.29.1.447.
- Blomaert, J. (2005). *Discourse: A critical introduction*. Cambridge, New York, et al: Cambridge University Press.
- Blum, D. (2006). *Official patriotism in Russia: Its essence and implications* (PONARS Policy Memo No. 420). Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).
- Blyth, M. (2003). Structures do not come with an instruction sheet: Interests, ideas and progress in political science. *Perspectives on Politics*, 1(4), 695-706.
- Boggs, C. (2000). *The end of politics. Corporate power and the decline of the public sphere*. New York. The Guilford Press.
- Bohman, J., & Rehg, W. (Eds.). (1997). *Deliberative democracy: Essays on reason and politics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Bollen, K.A., & Paxton, P. (2000). Subjective measures of liberal democracy. *Comparative Political Studies*, 33 (1), 58-86.
- Bollen, K.A. (1990). Political democracy: Conceptual and measurement traps. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 25 (1), 7-24.
- Bolman, L.G., & Deal, T.E. (1992). Leadership lessons from Mikhail Gorbachev. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 3 (1), 3-23.

- Borer, D.A., & Morrisette, J.J. (2006). Russian authoritarian pluralism: A local and global trend? *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 19(4), 571-588.
- Bosnman, J. (1987). Persuasive effects of political metaphors. *Metaphor & Symbol*, 2 (2), 97-113.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Boussafara-Omar, N. (2006). Learning the 'linguistic habitus' of a politician: A presidential authoritative voice in the making. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 5 (3), 325-358.
- Bowers, J.W., Ochs, D.J., & Jensen, R.J. (1993). *The rhetoric of agitation and control* (2nd ed.). Prospect Heights IL: Waveland Press.
- Bowler, S., Donovan, T., & Karp, J.A. (2006). Why politicians like electoral institutions: Self-interest, values, or ideology? *The Journal of Politics*, 68 (2), 434-446.
- Brady, H.E., & Collier, D. (Eds.). (2004). *Rethinking social inquiry: Diverse tools, shared standards*. Lanham et al: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Brass, P.R. (2000). Foucault steals political science. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 3, 305-330.
- Bressler, M.L. (2009). *Understanding contemporary Russia*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Brettschneider, C. (2006). The value theory of democracy. *Politics, Philosophy, & Economics*, 5(3), 259-278.

- Brooke, J.L. (1998). Reason and passion in the public sphere: Habermas and the cultural historians. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 29 (1), 43-67.
- Brooker, P. (2000). *Non-democratic regimes: Theory, government and politics*. Basingstoke & London: Macmillan Press.
- Brookes, R. (1999). Newspapers and national identity: The BSE/CJD crisis and the British press. *Media, Culture & Society*, 21(2), 247-263.
- Brooks, J. (1989). Public and private values in the soviet press, 1921-1928. *Slavic Review*, 48 (1), 16-35.
- Brooks, J. (1994). Socialist realism in Pravda: read all about it. *Slavic Review*, 53 (4), 973 - 991.
- Brovkin, V. (1990). Revolution from below: Informal political associations in Russia 1988-1989. *Soviet Studies*, 42 (2), 233-257.
- Brovkin, V. (1996). The emperor's new clothes: continuity of soviet political culture in contemporary Russia. *Problems of post-communism*, 43, 21-28
- Brovkin, V. (1998). Fragmentation of authority and privatization of the state: from Gorbachev to Yeltsin. *Demokratizatsiya*, 6 (3), 504-517.
- Brown, A. (2001). From democratization to 'guided democracy.' *Journal of Democracy*, 12 (4), 35-41
- Brumberg, D. (2002). The trap of liberalized autocracy. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(4), 56-68
- Brutents, K. (2006). Origins of the new thinking. *Russian Social Science Review*, 47 (1), 73-102.

- Brym, O. J. (1996). Re-evaluating mass support for political and economic change in Russia. *Europe-State Studies*, 48 (5), 751-766.
- Brzezinski, Z. (2008). Putin's Choice. *The Washington Quarterly*, 31 (2), 95-116.
- Buck, A.D. (2006). Post-socialist patronage: Expressions of resistance and loyalty. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 41 (3), 3-24.
- Buckley, M. (2001). Russian interpretation of crisis. *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 17 (3), 1-31.
- Buell, E. (1975). Eccentrics or gladiators: people who write about politics in letters to the editor. *Social Science Quarterly*, 56, 440-49
- Bühlmann, M., Merkel, W., Wessels, B., in collaboration with Lisa Müller. (2007). *The quality of democracy: Democracy barometer for established democracies* (Working paper no. 10). Zurich & Berlin: National Centre of Competence in Research.
- Bunce, V. (1995). Paper curtains and paper tigers. *Slavic Review*, 54 (4), 980-987.
- Bunce, V. (2000). Comparative democratization: Big and bounded generalization. *Comparative Political Studies*, 33 (6/7), 703-734.
- Bunce, V. (2003). Rethinking recent democratization: Lessons from the post-communist experience. *World Politics*, 55 (2), 167-192.
- Bunce, V. (2006). Global patterns and post-communist dynamics. *East European Democratization*, 50 (4), 601-620.
- Burgess, A. (2001). Universal democracy, diminished expectation. *Democratization*, 8 (3), 51-74.

- Butler, J. (1964). Russian rhetoric: A discipline manipulated by communism. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 50 (3), 229-239
- Buyandelgeriyn, M. (2008). Post-post-transition theories: Walking on multiple paths. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 37, 235-250.
- Caldas-Coulthard, C. R. & Coulthard, M. (Eds.). (1996). *Text and practices: Readings in critical discourse analysis*. Routledge: London & New York.
- Calhoun, C. (2007). Nationalism and cultures of democracy. *Public Culture* 19 (1), 151-173.
- Calhoun, C. (Ed.). (1992). *Habermas and the public sphere*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
- Callaghan, K., & Schnell, K. (2001). Assessing the democratic debate: How the news media frame elite policy discourse. *Political Communication*, 18, 183-212.
- Cameron, D. (2006). Ideology and language. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 11 (2), 141-152.
- Carnaghan, E. (2001). Thinking about democracy: Interviews with Russian citizens. *Slavic Review* 60 (2), 336-366.
- Carnaghan, E. (2007a). Do Russians dislike democracy? *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 40, 61-66.
- Carnaghan, E. (2007b). *Out of order: Russian political values in an imperfect world*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Carothers, T. (2002). The end of the transition paradigm. *Journal of Democracy* 13 (1), 5-21.

- Carpentier, N., & Cammaerts, B. (2006). Bringing hegemony, agonism, and journalism: An interview with Chantal Mouffe. *Journalism Studies*, 7(6), 964-75.
- Casper, G., & Taylor, M. M. (1996). *Negotiating democracy: Transitions from authoritarian rule*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Castoriadis, C. (1997). Democracy as procedure and democracy as regime. *Constellations*, 4 (1), 1-18.
- Cerf, A., Albee, M., & the editors of *Ogonyok* magazine. (1990). *Small fires: Letters from the Soviet people to Ogonyok magazine 1987-1990*. New York et al: Summit Books.
- Chadwick, A. (2000). Studying political ideas: A public political discourse approach. *Political Studies*, 48, 283-301.
- Chafetz, G. (1996-1997). The struggle for a national identity in post-soviet Russia, *Political Science Quarterly* 111 (4), 661-688.
- Chambers, S. (2003). Deliberative democratic theory. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 6, 307-326.
- Chambers, S. (2009). Rhetoric and the public sphere: Has deliberative democracy abandoned mass democracy? *Political Theory*, 37, 323-350. DOI: 10.1177/0090591709332336
- Chilton, P. & Schäffner, C. (2002). Introduction: themes and principles in the analysis of political discourse. In P. Chilton & C. Schäffner (Eds.), *Politics as text and talk: Analytical approaches to political discourse* (pp. 1-41). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

- Chilton, P., Ilyin, M., & Mey, J.L. (Eds.). (1998). *Political discourse in transition in Europe 1989-1991*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Chouliaraki, L., & Fairclough, N. (1999). *Discourse in late modernity: rethinking critical discourse analysis*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Christiano, T. (2004). The authority of democracy. *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 12, 266-290.
- Cichocka, H. (1993). The study of Byzantine rhetoric in Central and Eastern Europe: Selected problems. *Rhetorica* 11 (1), 43-49
- Cillia, R. de, Reisigl, M., & Wodak, R. (1999). The discursive construction of national identities. *Discourse & Society*, 10 (2), 149-173.
- Clark, J.C.D. (1994). *The language of liberty, 1660-1832: Political discourse and social dynamics in the Anglo-American world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clark, W. A. (2004). Russia at the polls: Potemkin Democracy. *Problems of post-Communism*, 51 (2), 22-29.
- Clayman, S. E. (2004). Arenas of interaction in the mediated public sphere. *Poetics*, 32, 29-49.
- Clesse, A., & Lounev, S. (Eds.). (2004). *The vitality of Russia*. Amsterdam: Dutch University Press.
- Cmiel, K. (1990). *Democratic eloquence: The fight over popular speech in nineteenth-century America*. New York: Morrow.
- Cobb, M. (2002). Changes in the Russian language in the post-Soviet period. *Dialog on Language Instruction*, 15 (1&2): 19-25.

- Cobb, M. D. & Kuklinski, J. H. (1997). Changing minds: Political arguments and political persuasion. *American Journal of Political Science*, 41 (1), 88-121.
- Collier, D & Mahon, J., Jr. (1993). Conceptual stretching revisited: Adapting categories in comparative analysis. *American Political Science Review*, 87, 845-855.
- Collier, D. & Adcock, R. (1999). Democracy and dichotomies: A pragmatic approach to choices about concepts. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2, 537-565.
- Collier, D., & Levitsky, S. (1997). Democracy with adjectives: Conceptual innovation in comparative research. *World Politics*, 49, 430-451.
- Collier, D., Hidalgo, F.D., & Maciuceanu, A.O. (2006). Essentially contested concepts: Debates and applications. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 11 (3), 211-246.
- Colton, T. J. (2000). *Transitional citizens: Voters and what influences them in the new Russia*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Colton, T. J. & McFaul, M. (2002). Are Russians undemocratic? *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 18 (2), 91-121.
- Connolly, W.E. (1991). *Identity/difference: Democratic negotiations of political paradox*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Connolly, W.E. (1993). *The terms of political discourse*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Connolly, W.E. (1995). *The ethos of pluralization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Cooper, C., Knotts, H.G., & Haspel, M. (2009). The content of political participation: Letters to the editor and the people who write them. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 42, 131-137.
- Coppedge, M., & Reinicke, W. H. (1990). Measuring polyarchy. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 25 (1), 51-72.
- Coppedge, M. (2002). Democracy and dimensions: Comments on Munck & Verkuilen. *Comparative Political Studies*, 35 (1), 35-39.
- Critchley, S. (2002). *On humor*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Cunningham, F. (2002). *Theories of democracy: A critical introduction*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Curran, J., & Gurevitch, M. (Eds.). (1991). *Mass media and society*. London & New York: E. Arnold.
- Dahl, R. (1989). *Democracy and its critics*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Dahl, R. (1999). The shifting boundaries of democratic governments. *Social Research*, 66 (3), 916-931.
- Dahlberg, L. (2005). The Habermasian public sphere: Taking difference seriously? *Theory and Society*, 34, 111-136.
- Dahlgren, P. (2002). In search of the talkative public: media, deliberative democracy and civic culture. *The public*, 9 (3), 1-21.
- Dalton, R. (2000). Citizen attitudes and political behavior. *Comparative Political Studies*, 33 (6/7), 912-940.

- Dalton, R., Shin, D.C. & Jou, W. (2007). Understanding democracy: Data from unlikely places. *Journal of Democracy*, 18 (4), 142-156.
- Dalton, R.J. (1994). Communists and democrats: Democratic attitudes in the two Germanies. *British Journal of Political Science*, 24, 469-493.
- Daniel, S. (2002). Integrating rhetoric and journalism to realize publics. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 5(3), 507-524.
- Daniel, S. L. (2002). *Rhetoric and journalism as common arts of public discourse: A theoretical, historical, and critical perspective* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI NO. 3099447).
- Daniloff, N. (1995). Mightier than the sword: The role of journalists in Russia. *Harvard International Review*, 17 (2), 36-40
- Davidson-Schmich, L.K., Hartmann, K. & Mummert, U. (2002). You can lead a horse to water, but you can't (always) make it drink: Positive freedom in the aftermath of German unification. *Communist & Post-Communist studies*, 35, 325-352.
- Dawisha, K. (2005). Communism as a lived system of ideas in contemporary Russia. *East European Politics & Societies*, 19 (3), 463-493.
- Dawisha, K., & Parrott, B. (Eds.). (1997). *Democratic change and authoritarian reactions in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova*. Cambridge CUP
- Delli Carpini, M. X., & Keeter, S. (1991). Stability and Change in the U.S. Public's Knowledge of Politics. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 55:583-612.

- Delli Carpini, M.X., Cook, F.L., & Jacobs, L.R. (2004). Public deliberation, discourse participation, and citizen engagement: A review of the empirical literature. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 7, 315-344.
- Derluigian, G. (2006). *The fourth Russian Empire?* (PONARS Policy Memo No 411). Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).
- Desai, P. (2005). Russian retrospective on reforms from Yeltsin to Putin. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 19 (1), 87-106.
- Desheriiev, Yu, D. (Ed.). (1984). *Sovremennaia ideologicheskaia borba i problemy iazyka*. Moskva: Nauka.
- Desjat' let sotsiologicheskikh nabljudenij*. (2003). Moskva: Institut Fonda "Obshchestvennoje mnenije."
- Devlin, J. (1995). *The rise of the Russian democrats: the causes and consequences of the elite revolution*. Aldershot, England, & Brookfield, VT: Edward Elgar.
- Dewey, J. (1927). *The public and its problems*. Athens: Swallow Press & Ohio University Press.
- Diamond, L. (2002). Thinking about hybrid regimes. *Journal of Democracy*, 13 (2), 21–35.
- Diamond, L. & Plattner, M.F. (2001). *The global divergence of democracies*. Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- DiCicco, J. M. & Levy, J. S. (1999). Power shifts and problem shifts: The evolution of the power transition research program. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 43 (6), 675-704.

- Dijk, T.A., van. (1993). Principles of critical discourse analysis. *Discourse and Society*, 4(2), 249-283.
- Dijk, T.A., van. (2002). Political discourse and political cognition. In P. Chilton & Ch. Schäffner (Eds.), *Politics as text and talk: analytical approaches to political discourse* (pp.203-237). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Dimock, W.C. (2007). Introduction: Genres as fields of knowledge. *PMLA*, 122 (5), 1377-1393.
- Diskin, A., Diskin, H., & Hazan, R.Y. (2005). Why democracies collapse: The reasons for democratic failure and success. *International Political Science Review*, 26 (3), 291-309.
- Dmitriev, P.A., Lilichm G.A., Potsenia, D.M. (Eds.). (2003). *Sovremenyie iazykovyie protsessy*. St. Petersburg: Saint-Petersburg University Press.
- Doktorov, B.Z. (2002). *Èpokha Eltsina: mneniia rossiian: Sotsiologicheskie ocherki* . Moskva: Institut Fonda "Obshchestvennoe mnenie."
- Domke, D., Lagos, T., Lapointe, M., Meade, M., & Xenos, M. (2000). Elite messages and source cues: moving beyond partisanship. *Political Communication*, 17, 395-402.
- Douglas, M. (1966). *Purity and danger: An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo*. New York: Praeger.
- Druckman, J.N. (2004). Political preference formation: Competition, deliberation, and the (ir)relevance of framing effects. *American Political Science Review*, 98 (4), 671-686.

- Dryzek, J. & Niemeyer, D. (2006). Reconciling pluralism and consensus as political ideals. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50 (3), 634-649.
- Dryzek, J. & Niemeyer, D. (2007). The theory and practice of discursive representation. A paper presented at APSA meeting, August 30-September 2, 2007.
- Dryzek, J. (1990). *Discursive democracy: Politics, policy, and political science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Duncan, P.J.S. (2005). Contemporary Russian identity between east and west. *The Historical Journal*, 48 (1), 277-294.
- Dunn, J.A. (1999). The transformation of Russian from a language of the Soviet type to a language of the Western type. In J. Dunn (Ed.), *Language and society in posts-communist Europe: Selected papers from the 5th world congress of central and eastern European studies, Warsaw, 1995* (pp.3-22). Houndsmills: Macmillan.
- Dunn, J.A. (Ed.). (1999). *Language and society in posts-communist Europe: Selected papers from the 5th world congress of central and eastern European studies, Warsaw, 1995*. Houndsmills: Macmillan.
- Dupuis-Deri, F. (2004). The political power of words: The birth of pro-democratic discourse in the nineteenth century in the United States and France. *Political Studies*, 52, 118-134.
- Edelman, M. (1977). *Political language: Words that succeed and policies that fail*. New York: Academic Press.
- Edelman, M. (1985). Political language and political reality, *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 8, 10-19.

- Ekiert, G. (1999). Ten years after: An optimistic view. *East European Politics and Societies*, 13 (2), 278-284.
- Ekiert, G., Kubik, J., & Vachudova, M.A. (2007). Democracy in the post-communist world: an unending quest? *East European Politics & Societies*, 21 (1), 7-30.
- Ekman, J. (2009). Political participation and regime stability: A framework for analyzing hybrid regimes. *International Political Science Review*, 30 (1), 7-31.
- Eliasoph, N. (2000). Where can Americans talk politics: Civil society, intimacy, and the case for deep citizenship. *The Communication Review*, 4 (1), 65-94
- Eliasoph, N. (2004). Can we theorize the press without theorizing the public? *Political Communication*, 21, 297-303.
- Elshtain, J. B. (1985). The relationship between political language and political reality. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 8, 20-26.
- Entman, R. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43 (4), 51-58.
- Esser, F., & Pfetsch, B. (Eds.). (2004). *Comparing political communication: Theories, cases and challenges*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Facon, I. (2008). *The West and post-Putin Russia: Does Russia 'leave the West?'* (Note de la FRS, No. 10.). Paris: Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Oxford & Cambridge. MA: Polity Press & Blackwell.
- Fairclough, N. (2000). *New labour, new language?* London: Routledge.

- Fairclough, N. (2007). Discursive transition in Central and Eastern Europe. In Shi-xu (Ed.) *Discourse as cultural struggle* (pp. 49-72). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Feldman, D.M. (2006). *Terminologija vlasti: sovetskie politicheskie terminy v istoriko-kulturnom kontekste*. Moskva: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet.
- Feldman, O., & de Landtsheer, C. (eds.) (1998). *Politically speaking: A worldwide examination of language used in the public sphere*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Femia, J.V. (2001). *Against the masses: Varieties of anti-democratic thought since the French revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ferguson, D.P. (1998). From communist control to glasnost and back? Media freedom in the former Soviet Union. *Public Relations Review* 24, 165-182.
- Ferree, M.M., Gamson, W.A., Gerhards, J., & Rucht, D. (2002). Four models of the public sphere in modern democracies. *Theory and Society*, 31, 289-324.
- Fetissenko, M. (2008). Bakhtin's Carnival as part of democratic elections: a re-examination. *Controversia*, 6 (1), 91-110.
- Finifter, A. W. (1996). Attitudes toward individual responsibility and political reform in the Soviet Union. *American Political Science Review*, 90, 138-152.
- Finifter, A. W., & Mickiewicz, E. (1992). Redefining the political system of the USSR: Mass support for political change. *American Political Science Review*, 86 (4), 857-874.

- Finlayson, A. (2004a). Political science, political ideas and rhetoric. *Economy and Society, interpretive approach in politics* 33 (4), 528-549.
- Finlayson, A. (2004b). The Interpretative Approach in Political Science: a symposium. Introduction. *British Journal of Political and International Relations*, 6, 129-164.
- Fish, M. S. (2005). The hazard of half-measures: perestroika and the failure of post-Soviet democratization. *Demokratizatsiya*, 13 (2), 241-253.
- Fish, M.S. (1995). *Democracy from scratch: opposition and regime in the new Russian revolution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Fish, M.S. (2001a). Putin's Path. *Journal of Democracy*, 12 (4), 71-78.
- Fish, M.S. (2001b). Democracy and Russian Politics. In Z. D. Barany & R.G. Moser (Eds.), *Russian Politics: Challenges of Democratization* (pp.215-254). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fishelov, D. (1993). *Metaphors of genre: The role of analogies in genre theory*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Fishkin, J. (1995). *The voice of the people: public opinion and democracy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Fishman, L. (2005). The formation of a predominating discourse in Russian Politics. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 6 (2), 193-208.
- Fitzpatrick, S. (1996b). Supplicants and citizens: Public letter-writing in Soviet Russia in the 1930s. *Slavic Review*, 55 (1), 78-105.
- Fitzpatrick, S. (1996a). Signals from below: Soviet letters of denunciation of the 1930s. *The Journal of Modern History*, 68 (4), 831-866.

- Fodor, E., Wnuk-Lipinski, E., & Yershova, N. (1995). The new political and cultural elite. *Theory and Society*, 24, 783-800.
- Fontana, B., Nederman, C. J., & Remer, G. (Eds.). (2004). *Talking democracy: Historical perspectives on rhetoric and democracy*. University Park PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archeology of knowledge*. Translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith. London: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writing, 1972-1977*. Translated by Colin Gordon et al. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1988). *Madness and civilization: A history of insanity in the Age of Reason*. Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (1991). Governmentality. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault Effect* (pp. 87-104). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, M. (1991). Politics' and the study of discourse. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault Effect* (pp. 53-72). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, M. (1991). Questions of method. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault Effect* (pp.73-86). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Franklin, B. (Ed.). (2008). *Pulling newspapers apart: Analyzing print journalism*. Routledge: London & New York.

- Franzosi, R. (1987). The press as a source of socio-historical data; issues in the methodology of data collection from newspaper. *Historical Methods*, 20 (1), 5–16.
- Fraser, N. (1990). Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy. *Social Text*, 25/26, 56-80.
- Freedman, A., & Wedway, P. (Eds.). (1994). *Genre and the New Rhetoric*. London & Bristol PA: Taylor & Francis.
- Freedom House. (2007, December 3). *Russain elections lack legitimacy; meaningful political competition absent*. Press Release. Washgitnon DC: Freedom House.
- Freidin, G. (1995, November 12). An electoral system turns politics into a circus, imperiling democracy. *Los Angeles Times*, Opinion page.
- Freidin, G. (1996, May 12). A question of political language. *Los Angeles News*, Opinion page.
- Frye, T. (2003). Markets, democracy, and new private business in Russia. *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 19 (1), 24-45.
- Fuchs, D. (1999). The Democratic Culture of Unified Germany. In P.Norris (Ed.), *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance* (123-145). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fuerst, J. (2006). In search of Soviet salvation: Young people write to the Stalinist authorities. *Contemporary European History*, 15 (3), 327-345.

- Fulkerson, R. P. (1979). The public letter as a rhetorical form structure, logic and style in King's "Letter from Birmingham jail." *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 65 (2), 121-36.
- Gaddy, C. G., & Kuchins, A.C. (2008). Putin's plan. *The Washington Quarterly*, 31 (2), 117-129.
- Gastil, J. (1992a). Undemocratic discourse: a review of theory and research on political discourse. *Discourse & Society*, 3 (4), 469-500.
- Gastil, J. (1992b). Why we believe in democracy: Testing theories of attitude functions and democracy. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 22 (6), 423-450.
- Gastil, R.D. (2007). *Freedom in the world: Political rights and civil liberties*. New York: Freedom House.
- Gastil, R.D. (2002). *Freedom in the world: Political rights and civil liberties*. New York: Freedom House.
- Geddes, B. (1999). What do we know about democratization after twenty years? *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, 115-144.
- Gel'man, V. (2008). Out of the frying pan, into the fire? Post-Soviet regime changes in comparative perspective. *International Political Science Review*, 29 (2), 157-180.
- Gibson, J.L. (1993). Perceived political freedom in the Soviet Union. *Journal of Politics* 55, 936-974.
- Gibson, J.L. (1996). A mile wide but an inch deep (?): The structure of democratic commitments in the former USSR. *American Journal of Political Science* 40, (2), 396-419.

- Gibson, J. L. (1997a). Mass opposition to the Soviet Putsch of August 1991: Collective action, rational choice and democratic values in the former Soviet Union. *American Political Science Review*, 91 (3), 671-684.
- Gibson, J.L. (1997b). The struggle between order and liberty in contemporary Russian political culture. *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 32 (2), 271-290.
- Gibson, J. L.(1998). Putting up with fellow Russians: An analysis of political tolerance in the fledgling Russian democracy. *Political Research quarterly*, 51, 37-68.
- Gibson, J.L. (2001). Social networks, civil society, and the prospects for consolidating Russia's democratic transition. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45 (1), 51-69.
- Gibson, J.L. (2002). Becoming tolerant? Short-term changes in Russian political culture. *British Journal of Political Science*, 32, 309-334.
- Gibson, J. L. & Duch, R.M. (1993). Political intolerance in the USSR: The distribution and etiology of mass opinion. *Comparative Political Studies*, 26 (3), 286-329.
- Gibson, J. L., Duch, R.M., & Tedin, K.L. (1992). Democratic values and the transformation of the Soviet Union. *Journal of Politics* 54, 329-371
- Gill, G. (2006). A new turn to authoritarian rule in Russia? *Democratization*, 13 (1), 58-77.
- Gjerstad, Ø. (2007). The polyphony of politics: finding voices in French political discourse. *Critical approaches to discourse analysis across disciplines*, 1 (2), 61-78.

- Gleditsch, K. & Ward, M.D. (1997). Double talk: A reexamination of democracy and autocracy in modern polities. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 41 (3), 361-383.
- Glynos, J. (2003). Radical democratic ethos, or, What is an authentic political act? *Contemporary Political Theory* 2, 187-208.
- Glynos, J., Howath, D., Norval, A., & Speed, E. (2009). *Discourse analysis varieties and methods* (Review paper). Southampton: University of Southampton, ESRC National Center for Research methods.
- Goldman, M. I. (2008). The new imperial Russia. *Demokratizatsiya*, 16 (1), 9-15.
- Goodnight, Th. G. (1990). The rhetorical tradition, modern communication, and the grounds of justified assent. In D.C. Williams & M. D. Hazen (Eds.), *Argumentation theory and the rhetoric of assent* (pp.173-195). Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- Goodnight, Th. G. (1997). Opening up “The Spaces of public dissention.” *Communication Monographs*, 64, 270-275.
- Gordon, N. (2001). Dahl’s procedural democracy: A Foucauldian critique. *Democratization*, 8 (4), 23-40.
- Gorham, M. S. (2000). Natsiia ili skilerizatsiia? Identity and perversion in the language debates of late and post-Soviet Russia. *The Russian Review* 59, 614-629.
- Gorham, M. S. (2003). *Speaking in Soviet tongues: Language culture and the politics of voice in revolutionary Russia*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press.
- Gorshkov, M.K. 2006. Perestroika through the eyes of Russians: Twenty years later. *Russian Social Science Review*, 47 (1), 4-72.

- Grabelnikov, A.A. (1996). *Sredstva massovoi informatsii postsovetskoy Rossii*, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Rossiyskogo Univerziteta Druzhby Narodov.
- Graham, T. (2008). Needles in a haystack: A new approach for identifying and assessing political talk in non-political discussion forums. *Javnost/The public*, 15 (2), 17-36.
- Graudina, L.K., Dmitrieva O.L., Novikova, N.V., Shiriaev, E.N. (1995). *My soxranim tebia russkaia rech*. Moskva: Nauka.
- Gray, J. (1995, January 22). Does democracy have a future? *New York Times Book Review*.
- Green, D. (1987). *Shaping political consciousness: The language of politics in America from McKinley to Reagan*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Greene, R. W. (2003). John Dewey's eloquent citizen: Communication, judgment and postmodern capitalism. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 39, 189-200.
- Grim, A. (2005). *Citizens deliberate the "Good Death": The vernacular rhetoric of euthanasia*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO.
- Gromova, R. (2000). Toward a typology of Russian political consciousness. *Russian Social Science Review*, 41 (6), 34-47.
- Guidry, J.A. & Sawyer, M. Q. (2003). Contentious pluralism: The public sphere and democracy. *Perspectives on Politics*, 1 (2), 273-290.
- Gunther, R., & Mughan, A. (2000). The political impact of the media: A reassessment. In R. Gunther, & A. Mughan (Eds.). *Democracy and the media. A comparative perspective* (pp.402-447). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Gutmann, A., & Thompson, D. (1996). *Democracy and disagreement: Why moral conflict cannot be avoided in politic, and what should be done about it*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Ha, S. (2002). Political Sophistication and Agenda-setting Susceptibility: a selective filter model. A paper presented to the International Communication Association, Seoul.
- Habermas, J. (1991). *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Habermas, J. (2007). The language game of responsible agency and the problem of free will. How can epistemic dualism be reconciled with ontological monism? *Philosophical Explorations*, 10 (1), 13-50.
- Hadenious, A., & Teorell, J. (2007). Pathways form authoritarianism. *Journal of Democracy*, 18 (1), 143-156.
- Hahn, J. (1993). Attitudes toward reform among provincial Russia politicians. *Post-Soviet affairs* 9 (1), 66-85
- Hahn, J. W. (1991). Continuity and change in Russian political culture. *British Journal of Political Science*, 21, 393-421.
- Hahn, J. W., & Longvinenko, I. (2008). Generational differences in Russian attitudes towards democracy and the economy. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 60 (8), 1345-1369.
- Halldorsdottir, E. H. (2007). Fragments of lives – the use of private letters in historical research. *Nordic Journal of Women's Studies*, 15 (1), 35-49.
- Hallin, D.C., & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing media systems: three models of media and politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Hamburg, G.M. (2005). The revival of Russian conservatism. *Kritika: Exploration in Russian and Eurasian History*, 6 (1), 107-127.
- Hanson, R. L. (1989). Democracy. In T. Ball, J. Farr, & R.L. Hanson (Eds.) *Political innovation and conceptual change* (pp.68-89). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hanson, S. E. (2007). The uncertain future of Russia's weak state authoritarianism. *East European Politics and Societies*, 21 (1), 67-81.
- Hanson, S. E., & Kopstein, J.S. (2005). Regime type and diffusion in comparative politics methodology. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 38 (1), 69-99.
- Hariman, R. (1992). Decorum, power, and the courtly style. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 78, 149-172.
- Hariman, R. (2002). Allegory and democratic public culture in the post-modern era. *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, 35 (4), 267-296.
- Hariman, R. (2005). Three tropes of empire: necessity, spectacle, affection. *The public*, 12 (4), 11-26.
- Hart R. P., Jarvis, S. E., Jennings, W. P., & Smith-Howell, D. (2004). *Political Keywords: Using Language That Uses Us*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hart, R. P. (2000). *Campaign talk: Why elections are good for us*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hart, R.P., & Johnson, M.C. (1999). Constructing the electorate during presidential campaigns. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 29 (4), 830-850.

- Hart, R.P., Jennings, W., & Dixon, M. (2002). Imagining the American people: strategies for building political community. *Journal of Communication*, 53, 1-17.
- Hart, R.P., Sharon E Jarvis & Elvin T Lim. (2002). The American people in crisis: A content analysis. *Political Psychology*, 23 (2), 417-437.
- Hartley, J. (1992). *The politics of pictures: The creation of the public in the age of popular media*. Routledge, London.
- Hartnett, S.J. (2002). *Democratic dissent and the cultural fictions of antebellum America*. Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Hartnett, S.J., & Mercieca, J.R. (2006). "Has your courage rusted?" National security and the contested rhetorical norms of republicanism in post-revolutionary American 1789-1801. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 9 (1), 79-112.
- Hassner, P. (2008). Russia's transition to autocracy. *Journal of Democracy*, 19 (2), 5-15.
- Hauser, G. (1999). *Vernacular voices: The rhetoric of publics and public spheres*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.
- Hauser, G. A., & Grim, A. (Eds.). (2004). *Rhetorical Democracy: Discursive Practices of Civic Engagement. Selected papers from the 2002 Conference of the Rhetoric Society of America*. Mahwah NJ & London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Hauser, G.A. (2007). Vernacular discourse and the epistemic dimension of public opinion. *Communication Theory*, 17, 333-339. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2885.2007.00299.x

- Hawes, Th. ,& Thomas, S. (1996). Rhetorical uses of theme in newspaper editorials. *World Englishes, 15 (2)*, 159-170.
- Heidlebaugh, N.J. (2008). Invention and public dialogue: Lessons from rhetorical theories. *Communication Theory, 18*, 27-50.
- Heisey, D. R. (1993). The rhetoric of Anatoly Sobchak: Rule of law vs nomenklatura? *Southern Communication Journal 59*, 60-72
- Held, D. (2006). *Models of democracy* (3rd ed.). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Hellman, J. (1998). Winners take all: The politics of partial reform in postcommunist transition. *World Politics, 50*, 203-234.
- Henry, D. (1994). Toward 'a search for remedy': on political discourse in a democratic culture. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 80 (1)*, 91-128.
- Henry, L. A. (2006). Shaping social activism in post-Soviet Russia: Leadership, organizational diversity, and innovation. *Post-Soviet Affairs, 22 (2)*, 99-124.
- Herman, E., & Chomsky, N. (1988). *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media*. New York: Toronto: Random House.
- Herrera, R. (1996-97). Understanding the language of politics: A study of elites and masses. *Political Science Quarterly, 111 (4)*, 619-637.
- Hesli, V.L., & Reisinger, W.M. (Eds.). (2003). *The 1999-2000 elections in Russia: Their impact and legacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Higley, J. & Lengyel, G. (Eds.). (2000). *Elites after state socialism: Theories and analysis*. Lanham et al: Rowman & Littlefield.

- Higley, J., & Burton, M.G. (1989). The elite variable in democracy transitions and breakdowns. *American Sociological Review*, 54, 17-32.
- Higley, J., Burton, M.G., & Field, G.L. (1990). In defense of elite theory: A reply to Cammack. *American Sociological Review*, 55, 421-426.
- Higley, J., Kullberg, J., & Pakulski, J. (1996). The persistence of post-communist elites. *Journal of Democracy*, 7 (2), 133-147.
- Higley, J., Pakulski, J., & Wesolowski, W. (Eds.). (1998). *Post-communist elites and democracy in Eastern Europe*. Basingstoke & London: Macmillan Press.
- Hodge, B. (1989). National character and the discursive process: A study of transformation in popular metatexts. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 13, 427-444.
- Hoey, M., Mahlberg, M., Stubbs, M., & Teubert, W. (2007). *Text, discourse and corpora: theory and analysis*. London, New York: Continuum.
- Hoffmann, A. (2005). Political parties, electoral systems and democracy: A cross-national analysis. *European Journal of Political Research*, 44 (2), 231-242.
- Holmberg, C. (2008). *Managing election in Russia: Mechanism and problems* (FOI-R-2474-SE, User Report). Stockholm: Swedish Defense Research Agency.
- Hough, J. F., Dvidheiser, E., & Goodrich Lehman, S. (1996). *The 1996 Russian presidential election* Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press.
- Howard, D. (2002). *The specter of democracy*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Howarth, D. (2002). An archeology of political discourse? Evaluating Michel Foucault's explanation and critique of ideology. *Political Studies*, 50, 117-135.

- Huntington, S. P. (1991). How countries democratize. *Political Science Quarterly*, 106 (4), 579-616.
- Huspek, M., & Kendall, K. (1991). On withholding political voice: An analysis of the political vocabulary of a 'non-political' speech community. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 77, 1-19.
- Hutchby, I. (1992). The pursuit of controversy: Routine skepticism in talk on 'talk radio.' *Sociology*, 26 (4), 673-694.
- Hutchby, I. (1999). Rhetorical strategies in audience participation debates on radio and TV. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 32 (3), 243-267
- Hutcheson, D.S., & Korosteleva, E. (2006). Patterns of participation in post-Soviet politics. *Comparative European Politics*, 4, 23-46.
- Hynds, E. C. (1990). Changes in editorials: A study of three newspapers, 1955-1985. *Journalism Quarterly*, 67 (2), 302-312.
- Hynds, E. C. (1991). Editorial page editors discuss the use of letters. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 13, 124-136.
- Hynds, E. C. (1994). Editors at most US dailies see vital roles for editorial page. *Journalism Quarterly*, 71 (3), 573-582.
- Hynds, E. C., & Archibald, E. (1996). Improved editorial pages can help papers, communities. *Newspaper Research Journal* 17 (1-2), 14-24.
- Ilie, C. (1998). The ideological remapping of semantic roles in totalitarian discourse, or, how to pain white roses red. *Discourse & Society*, 9(1), 57-80.

- Ilie, Cornelia. 2001. Semi-institutional discourse: The case of talk shows. *Journal of pragmatics*, 33, 209-254.
- Inglehart, R. (2000). Globalization and postmodern values. *The Washington Quarterly*, 23 (1), 215-228.
- Inglehart, R. (2003). How solid is mass support for democracy - and how can we measure it? *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 51-57.
- Inglehart, R., & Welzel, C. (2003). Political culture and democracy: Analyzing cross-level linkages. *Comparative Politics*, 36 (1), 61-79.
- Isham, H. (Ed.). (2001). *Russia's fate through Russian eyes: Voices of the new generation*. Boulder CO & London: Westview Press.
- Ishiyama, J.T., Launer, M. K., Likhachova, I.E., William, D.C., & Young, M.J. (1997). Russian Electoral Politics and the search for national identity. *Argumentation and advocacy* 34, 90-109
- Ivie, R. (2007). *Dissent from war*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press.
- Izadi, F., & Saghaye-Biria, H. (2007). A discourse analysis of elite American Newspaper editorials: The case of Iran's nuclear program. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 31 (2), 140-165.
- Jackson, I. (1971). *The provincial press and the community*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Jakubowicz, K. (2001). Rude awakening: social and media change in central and eastern Europe. *Javnost/The public* 8, (4), 59-80.

- Janack, J. A. (1996). *The troika of the Russian soul: Rhetoric and national identity in the post-Soviet era* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 9944129)
- Janack, J. A. (2004). Soviet journalism as epideictic rhetoric. *The Review of Communication, 4* (3-4), 301-303.
- Jensen, J. (2002). *Is art good for us? Beliefs about high culture in American life*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Jick, T. D. (1979). Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods: Triangulation in action. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 24* (December), 602-611.
- Johnston, B. (2002). Discourse analysis as a methodology for rhetorical study. A paper presented at Rhetorical Society of America, Las Vegas, May 2002.
- Jolly, M., & Stanley, L. (2005). Letters as/not a genre. *Life Writing, 2* (2), 75-101.
- Karl, T.L., & Schmitter, P. (1991). What democracy is... and is not. *Journal of Democracy, 2*(3), 75-88.
- Karlerkar, K.D., Sussman, L.R., Koven, R., & Dine. T.A. (Eds.).(2003). *Freedom of the press 2003: A global survey of media independence*. Freedom House, New York & Washinton DC: Rowland & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Karlerkar, K.D. (Ed.). (2005). *Freedom of the press 2005: A global survey of media independence*. Freedom House, New York & Washinton DC: Rowland & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

- Karlerkar, K.D. (Ed.). (2007). *Freedom of the press 2007: A global survey of media independence*. Freedom House, New York & Washinton DC: Rowland & Littlefild Publishers, Inc
- Kaul, M. (1998). Breakthourgh and blind alley: The lexicon of perestroika. In P. Chilton, M. Ilyin, & J.L. Mey. (Eds.), *Political discourse in transition in Europe 1989-1991* (pp.95-110). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Keenan, A. (2003). *Democracy in question: Democratic opennness in a time of political closure*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Kelly, D.R. (Ed.). (2003). *After communism: Perspectives on democracy*. Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press.
- Keman, H. (Ed.). (2002). *Comparative democratic politics. A guide to contemporary theory and research*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Kenez, P. (1985). *The Birth of the Propaganda State. Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917–1929*. Cambridge University Press, New York.
- Kibbey, A. (1986). *The interpretation of material shapes in Puritanism: A study of rhetoric, prejudice, and violence*. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kinder, D. R. (1998). Communication and opinion. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 1, 167-197.
- Kitschelt, H. (2000). Linkages between citizens and politicians in democratic polities. *Comparative Politics Studies*, 33 (6/7), 845-879.

- Klemperer, V. (2000). *The language of the Third Reich: LIT – Lingua Tertii Imperii: A philologist's notebook*. Translated by Martin Brady. Originally published 1957. London & New Brunswick, NJ: The Athlone Press.
- Kolesov, V.V. (2003). "Kak slovo nashe otzovetsia..." (Russkii iazyk v sovremennoi Rossii). In P.A. Dmitriev, G.A. Lilichm, D.M. Potsenia (Eds.), *Sovremenyie iazykovyie protsessy*. St. Petersburg: Saint-Petersburg University Press.
- Koltsova, O. (2006). *News media and power in Russia*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Korotich, V., & Porter, C. (1990). *The new Soviet journalism: The best of the Soviet weekly 'Ogonyok.'* Boston: Beacon Press.
- Kostomarov, B.G. (1994). *Iazykovoii vkus epochi: Iz nabliudenii nad rechevoi praktikoi mass-media*. Moskva: Pedagogika-Press.
- Kozlov, V. A. (1996). Denunciation and its functions in Soviet governance: A study of denunciations and their bureaucracy handling form Soviet police archives, 1944-1953. *The Journal of Modern History*, 68, 867-898.
- Krasnoboka, N. (2002). Real journalism goes underground: The internet underground: the phenomenon of online media in the former Soviet Union Republics. *International Communication Gazette*, 64 (5), 479-499.
- Krell-Laluhova, Z., & Schneider, S. (2004). Legitimacy and the democratic quality of the political order in Britain, Germany & Switzerland: A discourse analytical perspective. A paper presented at the ECPR Joint sessions of Workshops. University of Uppsala, Sweden, April 13-18, 2004.
- Kress, G. & Hodge, B. (1979). *Language and Ideology*, London: Routledge.

- Kress, G. (1986). Language in the media: the construction of the domain of public and private. *Media, Culture & Society*, 8, 395-419.
- Kress, G. (1989). History and language: Towards a social account of linguistic change. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 13, 445-466.
- Kriesi, H. (2008). Political mobilization, political participation and the power of the vote. *West European Politics*, 31 (1-2), 147-168.
- Kruglov, A.A. (1955). *Peredoviia stat'ia v gazete*. Moskva.
- Ku, A. S. (2001). The 'public' up against the state: narrative cracks and credibility crisis in post-colonial Hong Kong. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 18(1), 121-144.
- Kubicek, P. (2000). Post-communist political studies: ten year later, twenty years behind? *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 33, 295-309.
- Kullberg, J. S. (1994). The ideological roots of elite political conflict in post-Soviet Russia. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 46 (6), 929-953.
- Kullberg, J.S. & Zimmerman, W. (1999). Liberal elites, socialist masses, and problems of Russian democracy. *World Politics* 51 (3), 323-358.
- Kupina, N.A. (1995). *Totalitarnii iazyk: slovar i rechevie reaktsii*. Ekaterinburg & Perm: Izdatelstvo Uralskogo Universiteta.
- Kurilkin, A.R., & Trapkova, A.V. (Eds.). (2005). *Vniz po vertikali: Pervaiia chetyrekhletka Putina glazami liberalov. Sbornik statei*. Moskva: KoLibri, 2005.
- Kutkovets, T., & Klyamkin, I. (2005). Normalnye lyudi v nenormalnoi strane. In A.R.Kurilkin, & A.V.Trapkova (Eds.), *Vniz po vertikali* (pp.50-56). Moskva: KoLibri (originally published in *The Moscow News*, 3 July, 2002).

- Kuypers, J. A., Young, M., & Launer, M.K. (2001). Composite narrative, authoritarian discourse, and the Soviet response to the destruction of Iran air Flight 655. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 8 (3), 305-320.
- Kymlicka, W. (2001). *Politics in the vernacular: Nationalism, multiculturalism, and citizenship*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.
- Laibman, D. (2005). The Soviet demise: Revisionist betrayal, structural defect, or authoritarian distortion? *Science and Society*, 69 (4), 594-606.
- Laitin, D. D. (2000). Post-Soviet politics. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 3, 117-148.
- Lakoff, G. (1995). Metaphor, morality, and politics, or, why conservative have left liberals in the dust. *Social Research*, 62 (2), 177-213.
- Lambiase, J. (2005). Impressing the editor: Rolling Stone letter writers and their rhetorical strategies for getting published. *Journal of Magazine and new Media Research*. Summer, 1-14.
- Lane, D. (1996). The Gorbachev revolution: The role of the political elite in regime disintegration. *Political Studies*, 44, 4-23.
- Lane, D. (1997). Transition under Yeltsin: The nomenklatura and political elite circulation. *Political Studies*, 45, 855-874.
- Lapteva, O.A. (1996). Stilisticheskiie priemy sozdaniia iazykovoi ironii v sovremennom gasetnom tekste. In N.N. Rozanova (Ed.) *Poetika, stilistika, iazyk i kultura. Pamyati Tatiyany Grigorevny Vinokur* (pp.150-157). Moskva: Nauka.
- Larsson, L. (2002). Journalists and politicians: A relationship requiring maneuvering space. *Journalism Studies*, 3 (1), 21-33.

- Lasswell, H.D. (1949). *Language and politics: Studies in quantitative semantics*. New York: George W. Stewart.
- Lasswell, H.D. (1968). *Language of politics: Studies in Quantitative semantics*. Cambridge MA: The MIT Press.
- Lazaraton, A. (2002). Quantitative and qualitative approaches to discourse analysis. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 22, 32-51.
- Le, E. (2002). Human rights discourse and international relations: *Le Monde's* editorials on Russia. *Discourse & Society*, 13 (3), 373-408.
- Le, E. (2004). Active participation within written argumentation: Metadiscourse and editorialist's authority. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 36, 687-714.
- Lee, F. L.F. & Lin, A. M.Y. (2006). Newspaper editorial discourse and the politics of self-censorship in Hong Kong. *Discourse & Society*, 17 (3), 331-358.
- Leeuwen, Th., van (2008). *Discourse and practice: New tools for critical discourse analysis*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lehfeldt, W. (2001). Iazyk sovetskoi epokhi ili novoiaz? *Russian Linguistics*, 25, 243-253.
- Lemaître, R. (2006). The rollback of democracy in Russian after Beslan. *Review of Central and East European Law*, 31, 369-411.
- Lenoe, M. E. (1999). Letter-writing and the state: Reader correspondence with newspapers as a source for early Soviet history. *Cahiers du Monde Russe*, 40 (1-2), 139-170.
- Levada, Yu. A. (2004). What the polls tell us. *Journal of Democracy*, 15 (3), 43-51.

- Levasseur, D.G., & Carlin, D.B. (2001). Egocentric argument and the public sphere: Citizen deliberations on public policy and policymakers. *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*, 4 (3), 407-431.
- Levintova, E. (2006). Revising Russian and Polish elite value orientations: Are the elites still committed to the original goals of post-communist transitions? *Communist and Post-Communist studies* 39, 175-199.
- Levitsky, S., & Way, L.A. (2002). The rise of competitive authoritarianism. *Journal of Democracy*, 13 (2), 51-65.
- Lieberman, R.C. (2002). Ideas, institutions, and political order: Explaining political change. *American Political Science Review*, 96 (4), 697-712.
- Linz, J.J. & Stepan, A. (1996). *Problems of democratic transition and consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and post-communist Europe*. Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Linz, J.J. (2000). *Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes*. Boulder, CO: L. Rienner.
- Linz, Juan J. 1978. *The breakdown of democratic regimes: crisis, breakdown, and re-equilibration*. Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Lipman, M. (2005). Constrained or irrelevant: The media in Putin's Russia. *Current History*, October, 319-324
- Lipman, M., & McFaul, M. (2001). 'Managed democracy' in Russia: Putin and the press. *Harvard Journal of Press/Politics*, 6 (3), 116-127.
- Lipset, S.M. (1960). *Political man: The social bases of politics*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

- Lipset, S.M. (1994). The social requisites of democracy revisited. *American Sociological Review*, 59, 1-22.
- Lloyd, J. (1999, May 15). Who lost Russia? *The New York Times Magazine*, p.34.
- Love, A. (2000). Democratic discourse? Realizing alternatives in Zimbabwean political discourse. *Zambezia*, 27 (1), 27-45.
- Lovell, D. W. (2001). Trust and the politics of postcommunism. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 34, 27-38.
- Lovell, S. (1996). Ogonek: The crisis of a genre. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 48 (6), 989-1006.
- Lucas, S.E. (1976). *Portents of rebellion: Rhetoric and revolution in Philadelphia, 1765-76*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Lukes, S. (1975). Political ritual and social integration. *Sociology*, 9, 289-308. DOI: 10.1177/003803857500900205.
- Lukin, A. (2009). Russia's new authoritarianism and the post-soviet political ideal. *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 25 (1), 66-92.
- Lyall, J. M.K. (2006). Pocket protests: Rhetorical coercion and the micropolitics of collective action in semi-authoritarian regimes. *World Politics* 58, 378-412.
- Lysakova, I.P. (2005). *Iazyk gazety i tipologija pressy: Sotsiolingvisticheskoe issledovanie*. SPb: Filologicheskii fakultet SpbGU.
- Macedo, S. (Ed.). (1999). *Deliberative politics: essays on democracy and disagreement*. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Macedo, S. (Ed.). (2005). *Democracy at risk: How political choices undermine citizen participation, and what we can do about it*. Brookings Institution Press: Washington, DC.
- Malia, M. (1999). *Russia under western eyes: From the Bronze Horseman to the Lenin Mausoleum*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Manae, O. (1995). Rethinking the social role of the media in a society in transition. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 20 (1), 45-65.
- Mara, G.M. (1993). Cries, eloquence & judgment: Interspersing political voice in democratic regimes. *Polity*, 26 (2), 155-187
- Marin, N. (2006). The other side(s) of history: The return of rhetoric. *Advances in the History of Rhetoric*, 9, 209-225.
- Marin, N. (2007). *After the fall: Rhetoric in the aftermath of dissent in post-communist times*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Marsh, Ch. (2000). Social capital and democracy in Russia. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 33, 183-199.
- Martyanov, V. (2005). The evolution of key Russian political discourse: from 'western democracy' to 'the quality of democracy.' *Perspective on European Politics and Society*, 6 (2), 175-191.
- Mason, D. S., & Sidorenko-Stepheson, S. (1997). Public opinion and the 1996 election in Russia: Nostalgic and statist, yet pro-market and pro-Yeltsin. *Slavic Review*, 56 (4), 698-717.

- Matukhno, N. (2009). Do Russian elites and masses support democracy? A paper presented at the Mid-western Political Science Association, Chicago, April 2-5, 2009.
- Mbembe, A. (1992). The banality of power and the aesthetic of vulgarity in the post-colony. *Public Culture*, 4 (2), 1-30.
- McAuley, M. (1997). *Russia's politics of uncertainty*. Cambridge: New York: Cambridge University Press.
- McChesney, R. (1999). *Rich media, poor democracy: Communication politics in dubious times*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- McCombs, M. (2005). A look at agenda-setting: past, present and future. *Journalism Studies*, 6 (4), 543-557.
- McDaniel, T. (1996). *The agony of the Russian idea*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- McFaul, M. (2001a). A mixed record, an uncertain future. *Journal of Democracy*, 12 (4), 87-94.
- McFaul, M. (2001b). *Russia's unfinished revolution: Political change from Gorbachev to Putin*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press.
- McFaul, M. (2002). The fourth wave of democracy and dictatorship: Non-cooperative transitions in the post-communist world. *World Politics*, 54, 212-244.
- McFaul, M. (2005). Transitions from post-communism. *Journal of Democracy*, 16 (3), 5-19.

- McFaul, M., & Petrov, N. (2004). What the elections tell us. *Journal of democracy*, 15 (3), 20-31.
- McNair, B. (2000). *Journalism and democracy: An evaluation of the political public sphere*. Routledge: London & New York.
- McNair, B. (2003). From control to chaos: Towards a new sociology of journalism. *Media, Culture & Society*, 25, 547-555.
- Mendelson, S., & Gerber, Th. P. (2005-2006). Soviet nostalgia: An impediment to Russian democratization. *The Washington Quarterly*, 29 (1), 83-96.
- Mendelson, S.E., & Gerber, Th. P. (2008). Us and Them: Anti-American views of the Putin generation. *The Washington Quarterly*, 31 (2), 131-150.
- Mickiewicz, E. (2000). Institutional incapacity, the attentive public, and media pluralism in Russia. In R. Gunther, & A. Mughan (Eds.), *Democracy and the media: A comparative perspective* (pp.85-121). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mickiewicz, E.P. (1999). *Changing channels: Television and the struggle for power in Russia*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Miller, A.H., Hesli, V.L., & Reisinger, W.M. (1995). Comparing citizen and elite belief systems in post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 59, 1-40.
- Miller, A.H., Hesli, V.L., & Reisinger, W.M. (1997). Conceptions of democracy among mass and elite in post-Soviet societies. *British Journal of Political Science*, 27 (2), 157-190.

- Miller, J. M., & Krosnick, J.A. (2000). News media impact on the ingredients of presidential evaluations: Politically knowledgeable citizens are guided by a trusted source. *American Journal of Political Science*, 44, 301-315.
- Mishler, W., & Rose, R. (1997). Trust, distrust and skepticism: popular evaluations of civil and political institutions in post-communist societies. *The Journal of Politics*, 59(2), 418-451.
- Mishler, W., & Rose, R. (2001a). Political support for incomplete democracies: Realist vs idealist theories and measures. *International Political Science Review*, 22 (4), 303-320.
- Mishler, W., & Rose, R. (2001b). What are the origins of political trust? Testing institutional and cultural theories in post-Communist societies. *Comparative Political Studies*, 34 (1), 30-62.
- Mishler, W., & Rose, R. (2002). Learning and re-learning regime support: The dynamics of post-communist regimes. *European Journal of Political Research*, 41, 5-36.
- Mishler, W., & Rose, R. (2005). What are the political consequences of trust? A test of cultural and initial theories in Russia. *Comparative Political Studies*, 38 (9), 1050-1078.
- Mishler, W., & Willerton, J.P. (2003). The dynamics of presidential popularity in post-communist Russia: Cultural imperative versus neo-institutional choice? *The Journal of Politics*, 65 (1), 111-141.
- Mokienko, V.M. (1999). The Russian language 'on the brink': The linguistic situation in present-day Russia. In J. Dunn (Ed.), *Language and society in posts-communist*

- Europe. Selected papers from the 5th world congress of central and eastern European studies, Warsaw, 1995* (pp.70-85). Houndsmills: Macmillan.
- Moodie, E., Markova, I., & Plichtova, J. (1995). Lay representations of democracy: A study in two cultures. *Culture & Psychology, 1*, 423-453.
- Morrison, A., & Love, A. (1996). A discourse of disillusionment: letters to the editor in two Zimbabwean magazines after independence. *Discourse and Society, 7* (1), 39-75.
- Mouffe, C. (1999). Deliberative democracy or agonistic pluralism? *Social Research, 66*, 745-758.
- Mouffe, C. (2000). *The democratic paradox*. London, New York: Verso.
- Mouffe, C. (2005). *The return of the political*. London, New York: Verso.
- Mughan, A., & Gunther, R. (2000). The media in democratic and non-democratic regimes: A multilevel perspective. In R. Gunther, & A. Mughan (Eds.), *Democracy and the media. A comparative perspective* (pp.1-27). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Munck, G.L., & Verkuilen, J. (2002). Conceptualization and measuring democracy: Evaluating alternative indices. *Comparative political Studies, 35* (1), 5-34.
- Munro, N. (2006). Russia's persistent communist legacy: Nostalgia, reaction, and reactionary expectations. *Post-Soviet Affairs, 22* (4), 289-313.
- Murray, J. (1999). Still no truth in the news? Coverage by *Izvestiya* of the 1996 presidential elections. *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics, 15* (2), 1-40.

- Murray, J. (1992). Perestroika and the language of the press. *Irish Slavonic Studies* 12, 97-111.
- Murray, J. (1994). *The Russian press from Brezhnev to Yeltzin: Behind the paper curtain*. Vermont: Edward Edgar.
- Murrell, G.D.G. (1997). *Russia's transition to democracy: An internal political history, 1989-1996*. Portland, OR: Sussex Academic Press.
- Mutz, D.C. (2008). Is deliberative democracy a falsifiable theory? *Annual Review of Political Science*, 11, 521-538.
- Mutz, Diana, C. (2006). *Hearing the other side: Deliberative versus participatory democracy*. Cambridge et al: Cambridge University Press.
- Nadkarni, M. (2007). The master's voice: Authenticity, nostalgia, and the refusal of irony in post socialist Hungary. *Social identity*, 13 (5), 611-626
- Nanri, K. (2005). The conundrum of Japanese editorials: Polarized, diversified, and homogenous. *Japanese Studies*, 25 (2), 169-185.
- Neidhart, C. (2003). *Russia's carnival: The smells, sights, and sounds of transition*. Lanham et al: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Newton, J. M. (2005). A dynamic threesome: Materialism, ideas, and leadership in the Soviet and Russian transition. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 10 (2), 219-228.
- Nivat, A. (2000). Russian presidential campaign coverage. *Harvard journal of Press/politics* 5 (1), 92-97.
- Norval, A.J. (2007). *Aversive democracy: Inheritance and originality in the democratic tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- O'Donnell, G. A. (1996). Illusions and conceptual flaws. *Journal of Democracy*, 7 (4), 160 -168.
- O'Donnell, G.A. (1996). Illusions about consolidation. *Journal of Democracy*, 7 (2), 34-51.
- O'Kane, R. (2004). *Paths to democracy: Revolution and totalitarianism*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Ono, K., & Sloop, J.M. (1995). The critique of vernacular discourse. *Communication Monographs*, 62, 19-46
- Ordeshook, P.C. (1995). Institutions and incentives. *Journal of Democracy*, 6 (2), 46-60.
- Ordzhonikidze, M. (2008). Russian's perceptions of Western values. *Russian Social Science Review*, 49 (6), 4-29.
- Ottaway, M. (2003). *Democracy challenged: The rise of semi-authoritarianism*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Oushakine, S. (2000). In the state of post-Soviet aphasia: Symbolic development in contemporary Russia. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 52 (6), 991-1016.
- Ovsepyan, R.P.(1996). *Iztoriiia noveisheii otechestvennoi zhurnalistiki*. Moskva: Izdatelstvo Moskovskogo Universiteta.
- Palczewski, C.H. (1996). Bodies, borders and letters: Gloria Anzaldua's 'Speaking in tongues: A letter to 3rd world women writers'. *The Southern Communication Journal*, 62 (1), 1-16.

- Paley, J. (2002). Towards an anthropology of democracy. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 31, 469-496.
- Pammett, J. (1996). The meaning of elections in transitional democracies: Evidence from Russia and Ukraine. *Election Studies*, 15(3), 363-381.
- Parkin, D. (1984). Political language. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 13, 345-365.
- Pasti, S. (2005). Two generations of contemporary Russian journalists. *European Journal of Communication*, 20 (1), 89-115.
- Patico, J. (2009). Spinning the market: The oral alchemy of everyday talk in post-socialist Russia. *Critique of Anthropology*, 29 (2), 205-224.
- Pelinka, A. (2007). Language as a political category: the viewpoint of political science. *Journal of Language and Ideology*, 6 (1), 129-143.
- Perrin, A.J. & Vaisey, S. (2008). Parallel public spheres: Distance and discourse in letters to the editor. *American Journal of Sociology*, 114 (3), 781-810.
- Peters, J.D. (1999). Public journalism and democratic theory: Four challenges. In T.K. Glasser (Ed.), *The idea of public journalism* (pp.99-117). New York: Guilford Press.
- Petersoo, P. (2007). What does 'we' mean? National deixis in the media. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 6 (3), 419-436.
- Petrov, N. (2006). *The full circle of political evolution in Russia: From chaotic to over-managed democracy* (PONARS Policy Memo No. 413). Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

- Peunova, M. (2008). From dissidents to collaborators: The resurgence and demise of the Russian critical intelligentsia since 1985. *Studies in East European Thought*, 60, 231-250.
- Phelan, S. (2007). The discursive dynamics of neo-liberal consensus: Irish broadsheet editorials and the privatization of Eircom. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 6 (1), 7-28.
- Phelan, S. (2009). The newspaper as political antagonist: Editorial discourse and the othering of Maori perspectives on the foreshore and seabed conflict. *Journalism*, 10 (2), 217-237.
- Phillips, L. (1996). Rhetoric and the spread of Thatcherism. *Discourse and Society*, 7, 209-241.
- Phillips, L. (1998). Hegemony and political discourse: The lasting impact of Thatcherism. *Sociology*, 32 (4), 847-867.
- Phillips, L., & Jorgensen, M.W. (2002). *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. London, Thousand Oaks, & New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Pietilainen, J. (2002). *The regional newspaper in post-Soviet Russia* (Doctorial dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & These database (UMI No. 764619231).
- Pipes, R. (2004). Flight from freedom: What Russians think and want. *Foreign Affairs*, 83 (3), 9-15.
- Pocock, J.G.A. (1971). *Politics, language and time: Essays on political thought and history*. New York: Atheneum.

- Politkovskaya, A. (2007). *A Russian diary*. Translated by Arch Tait. London & New York: Random House.
- Pöppel, L. (2007). *The rhetoric of Pravda editorials: A diachronic study of a political genre*. Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. Stockholm Slavic Studies 33, Stockholm University.
- Pounds, G. (2006). Democratic participation and letters to the editor in Britain and Italy. *Discourse & Society*, 17 (1), 29-63.
- Prozorov, S. (2005). Russian conservatism in the Putin presidency: The dispersion of a hegemonic discourse. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 10 (2), 121-143.
- Puddington, A. (2007). *Freedom in the World 2007: Freedom stagnation amid pushback against democracy*. Retrieved online: <http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00004193/>
- Putnam, R.D. (1995). Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy*, 6 (1), 65-78.
- Putnam, R.D. (with Leonardi, R & Nanetti, R.Y). (1993). *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Raeymaeckers, K. (2005). Letters to the editor: A feedback opportunity turned into a marketing tool: An account of selection and editing practices in the Flemish daily press. *European Journal of Communication*, 20 (2), 199-221.
- Reader, B. (2005). Who's really writing those canned letters to the editor? *Newspaper Research Journal*, 26 (2&3), 43-56
- Reader, B. (2008). Turf wars? Rhetorical struggle over 'prepared'; letters to the editor. *Journalism*, 9(5), 606-623.

- Reisinger, W., Miller, A.H., Hesli, V.L., & Maher, K.H. (1994). Political values in Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania: Sources and implications for democracy. *British Journal of Political Science*, 24, 183-223.
- Reisinger, W.M., Melville, A.Yu., Miller, A.H., & Hesli, V.L. (1996). Mass and elite political outlooks in post-Soviet Russia: How congruent? *Political Research Quarterly*, 49 (1), 77-101.
- Remington, Th. (1988). *The truth of authority: Ideology and communication in the Soviet Union*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Richardson, J. E. (2007). *Analyzing newspapers: An approach from critical discourse analysis*. Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Richardson, J.E. (2001). Now is the time to put an end to all this: argumentative discourse theory and letters to the editor. *Discourse & Society*, 12 (2), 143-168.
- Richardson, J.E., & Franklin, B. (2003). Dear Editor: Race, readers' letters and the local press. *The Political Quarterly*, 74 (2), 184-192.
- Richardson, J.E., & Franklin, B. (2004). Letters of intent: Election campaigning or orchestrated public debate in local newspapers' letters to the editor. *Political Communication*, 21, 459-478.
- Richter, A. (2008). Post-soviet perspective on censorship and freedom of the media: An overview. *The International Communication Gazette*, 70 (5), 307-324.
- Rivera, S.W. (2000). Elites in post-communist Russia: A changing of the guard? *Europe-Asia Studies*, 52 (3), 413-432.

- Rivera, S.W. (2004). Elites and the diffusion of foreign models in Russia, *Political studies*, 52, 43-62.
- Rivera, S.W., Kozyreva, P.M., & Sarovskii, E.G. (2002). Interviewing political elites: Lessons from Russia. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 35 (4), 683-688.
- Roberts-Miller, P. (1999). *Voices in the wilderness: Public discourse and the paradox of Puritan rhetoric*. Tuscaloosa & London: The University of Alabama Press.
- Robertson, A. W. (1995). *The language of democracy: Political rhetoric in the United States and Britain: 1790-1900*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Rodden, J. (2004). Politics and the German language. *Debatte*, 12 (1), 46-63.
- Rodgers, D.T. (1987). *Contested truths: Keywords in American politics since independence*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Rose, R. (1994). Postcommunism and the problem of trust. *Journal of Democracy*, 5 (3), 18-30.
- Rose, R., & Mishler, W. (2002). Comparing regime support in non-democratic and democratic countries. *Democratization*, 9 (2), 1-20.
- Rose, R., & Munro, N. (2002). *Election without order: Russia's challenge to Vladimir Putin*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, New York et al.
- Rose, R., Mishler, W., & Munro, N. (2008). *Russian transformed: Developing popular support for a new regime*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.
- Rose, R., Munro, N., & Mishler, W. (2004). Resigned acceptance of an incomplete democracy: Russia's political equilibrium. *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 20 (3), 195-218.

- Rosenkrans, G. (2001). Since the end of the state-run press: Evolution of Russian newspapers from perestroika to 1998. *Journal of Government Information*, 28, 549-560.
- Ross, M. (2001). Does oil hinder democracy? *World Politics*, 53 (3), 325-361.
- Rupar, V. (2007). Newspapers' production of common sense: The 'greenie madness' or why should we read editorials? *Journalism*, 8 (5), 591-610.
- Rutland, P. (2004). Democracy and nationalism in Armenia. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 46, 839-861.
- Ryazanova-Clarke, L. (2002). Developments in the Russian Language in the Post-Soviet Period. *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 18 (1), pp. 97-116
- Ryazanova-Clarke, L., & Wade, T. (1999). *The Russian language today*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Ryvkina, R.V. 2008. Egalitarianism of the mass consciousness of the Russian population as an indicator of a conflicted society. *Sociological Research*, 47 (1), 6-18.
- Sakwa, R. (1995). Subjectivity, politics, and order in Russia political evolution. *Slavic review* 54: 943-964
- Sakwa, R. (1998). *Soviet Politics in Perspective* (2nd ed.). London & New York: Routledge
- Sakwa, R. (2005). Perestroika and the challenge of democracy in Russia. *Demokratizatsiya*, 13 (2), 255-275.
- Salazar, P.-J. (2002). *An African Athens: Rhetoric and the shaping of democracy in South Africa*. Mahwah, NJ & London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

- Schaffer, F.C. (1998). *Democracy in translation: Understanding politics in an unfamiliar culture*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press.
- Schedler, A. (2001). Taking uncertainty seriously: The blurred boundaries of democratic transition and consolidation. *Democratization*, 8 (4), 1-22.
- Schedler, A., & Sarsfield, R. (2007). Democrats with adjectives: linking direct and indirect measures of democratic support. *European Journal of Political Research*, 46, 637-659.
- Schillinger, E. (1989). Two Moscow dailies: content changes and glasnost. *Journalism Quarterly* 66 (4), 828-835.
- Schmidt, V. (2008). Discursive institutionalism: the explanatory power of ideas and discourse. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 11, 303-326.
- Schmitter, P.C. & Karl, T.L. (1991). What democracy is... and is not. *Journal of Democracy*, 2 (3), 75-88.
- Schudson, M. (1997). Why conversation is not the soul of democracy. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 14 (4), 297-310.
- Schudson, M. (2001a). Politics as cultural practice. *Political Communication*, 18, 421-431.
- Schudson, M. (2001b). The objectivity norm in American journalism. *Journalism*, 2 (2), 149-170.
- Seyranian, V., & Bligh, M. (2008). Presidential charismatic leadership: Exploring the rhetoric of social change. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 19 (1), 54-76.

- Shenhav, S. R. (2007). Detecting stories: revealing hidden 'voices' in public political discourse. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 6 (2), 177-200.
- Shenhav, S.R. (2005). Thin and thick narrative analysis: On the question of defining and analyzing political narratives. *Narrative Inquiry*, 15 (1), 75-99.
- Shevchenko, O. (2001). Bread and circuses: shifting frames and changing references in ordinary Muscovites' political talk. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 34, 77-90.
- Shevtsova, L. (1995). The two sides of the new Russia. *Journal of Democracy*, 6 (3), 56-71.
- Shevtsova, L. (2000). The problem of executive power in Russia. *Journal of Democracy*, 11 (1), 32-39.
- Shevtsova, L. (2001). Russia's hybrid regime. *Journal of Democracy*, 12 (4), 65-70.
- Shevtsova, L. (2003). *Putin's Russia*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Shevtsova, L. (2005). Vpered v proshloe ili manifestatsiya stagnatsii. In A.R.Kurilkin, & A.V.Trapkova (Eds.), *Vniz po vertikali* (pp.309-315). Moskva: KoLibri (originally published in *Izvestiia*, February 25, 2004).
- Shevtsova, L. (2007). *Russia: Lost in transition. The Yeltsin and Putin legacies*. Translated by Arch Tait. Washington, DC et al: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Shi-xu. (Ed.). (2007). *Discourse as cultural struggle*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

- Shlapentokh, V. (1986). *Soviet public opinion and ideology: The interaction between mythology and pragmatism*. New York: Praeger.
- Shlapentokh, V. (1989). *The public and private life of the Soviet people*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Shlapentokh, V. (1990). Public opinion in Gorbachev's USSR: Consensus and polarization. *Media, Culture & Society*, 12, 153-174.
- Shlapentokh, V. (1999). No one needs public opinion data in post communist Russia. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 32, 453-460.
- Shlapentokh, V. (2005). Two simplified pictures of Putin's Russia, both wrong. *World Policy Journal*, 22 (1), 61-72.
- Shlapentokh, V. (2006). Trust in public institutions in Russia: The lowest in the world. *Communist and post-Communist Studies*, 39, 153-174.
- Sigelman, L., & Walkosz, B.J. (1992). Letters to the editor as a public opinion thermometer: The Martin Luther King holiday vote in Arizona. *Social Science Quarterly*, 73 (4), 938-946.
- Sil, R., & Cheng Chen. 2004. State legitimacy and the (in)significance of democracy in post-communist Russia. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 56 (3), 347-368.
- Simon, A. F., & Jerit, J. (2007). Toward a theory relation political discourse, media and public opinion. *Journal of Communication* 57, 254-271.
- Simon, R. (2004). Media, myth, and reality in Russia's state-managed democracy. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 57 (1), 169-184.

- Simons, G., & Strovsky, D. (2006). Censorship in contemporary Russian journalism in the age of the war against terrorism. *European Journal of Communication* 21 (2), 189-211.
- Sinekopova, G. (2006). Building the public sphere: Bases and biases. *Journal of communication* 56, 505-522.
- Slatter, J. (2000). *Newspaper Russian: a vocabulary of administrative and commercial idiom*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Smaele, H., de. (1999). The applicability of western media models in the Russian media system. *European Journal of Communication* 14 (2), 173-189.
- Smith A.C.H. (with Elizabeth Immirzi & Trevor Blackwell). (1975). *Paper voices: The popular press and social change 1935-1965*. Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Smith, A. R. (2008). Dialogue in agony: The problem of communication in authoritarian regimes. *Communication Theory*, 18, 160-185.
- Smith, K. S. (2002). *Mythmaking in the new Russia: Politics and memory during the Yelstin era*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca & London.
- Sokolov, A.K. (Ed.). (1998). *Obschestvo i ivlast': 1930-e gody: Povestvovanie v dokumentakh*. Moskva (Published in English as L. Siegelbaum & A. Sokolov (Eds), *Stalinism as a way of life: A narrative in documents*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).
- Solchanik, R. (1982). Russian language and Soviet politics. *Soviet Studies*, 34 (1), 23-42.
- Sparks, C. (1988). The popular press and political democracy. *Media, Culture & Society*, 10, 209-223.

- Sparrow, B.H. (2008). Who speaks for the people? The president, the press, and public opinion in the United States. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 38 (4), 578-592.
- Spencer, M. E. (1970). Politics and rhetoric. *Social Research*, 37, 567-623.
- Steele, J. (1994). *Eternal Russia: Yeltsin, Gorbachev, and the mirage of democracy*. London & Boston: Faber & Faber.
- Steen, A. (2001). The question of legitimacy: Elites and political support in Russia. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 53 (5), 697-718.
- Steen, A. (2002). The post-communist transformation: Elite orientations and the emerging Russian state. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 3 (1), 93-126.
- Steen, A., & Gel'man, V. (Eds.). (2003). *Elites and democratic development in Russia*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Stillar, G.F. (1998). *Analyzing everyday texts: Discourse, rhetoric and social perspectives*. Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, London & New Delhi.
- Stubbs, M. (2001). *Words and phrases: Corpus studies of lexical semantics*. Oxford & Malden MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Takeshita, T. (2005). Current critical problems in agenda-setting research. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 18 (3), 275-296.
- Teorell, J. & Hadenious, A. (2006). Democracy without democratic values: A rejoinder to Welzel and Inglehart. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 41 (3), 95-111.

- Thornborrow, J. (2002). *Power talk: Language and interaction in institutional discourse*. Harlow, New York et al: Longman.
- Tilly, Ch.(2007). *Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tishkov, V. & Olcott, M. (1999). From ethos to demos: The quest for Russia's identity. In A. Åslund, & M.B.Olcott (Eds.), *Russia after communism* (pp.61-90). Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Tolstaya, T. (2007). Democracy has nearly disappeared in Russia. *New Perspectives Quarterly*, 24 (3), 64-67.
- Tonn, M. B. (2005). Taking conversation, dialogue, and therapy public. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 8 (3), 405-430.
- Touraine, A. (1997). *What is democracy?* Boulder CO: Westview Press.
- Tracy, K., McDaniel, J.P., & Gronbeck, B.E. (2007). *The prettier doll: rhetoric, discourse, and ordinary democracy*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- Trenin, D. (2006). Russia leaves the West. *Foreign Affairs*, 85 (4), 87-96.
- Tretijakov, V. (2004). *Kak stat' znamenitym zhurnalistom: A series of lectures on theory and practice of contemporary Russian journalism*. Moskva: Lodomir.
- Tsygankov, A.P. (2005). Vladimir Putin's vision of Russia as a normal great power. *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 21 (2), 132-158.
- Turpin, J. (1995). *Reinventing the Soviet self: Media and social change in the former Soviet Union*. Westport, CT& London: Praeger.
- Urban, M. (1998a). Demythologizing the Russian state. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 50 (6), 969-992.

- Urban, M. (1998b). National conflict internalized: A discourse analysis of the fall of the first Russian republic. Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, *Research Series*, 98, 108-146.
- Urban, M. 1994. The politics of identity in Russia' post communist transition; the nation against itself. *Slavic Review* 53 (3), 733-765.
- Urban, M., Igrunov, V., & Mitrokhin, S. (1997). *The rebirth of politics in Russia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Volgy, Th., Krigbaum, M., Langan M. K., & Moshier, V. (1977). Some of my best friends are letter writers: Eccentrics and Gladiators revisited. *Social Science Quarterly*, 58, 321-327.
- Voltmer, K. (2000). Constructing political reality in Russia: Izvestiya – Between old and new journalistic practices. *European Journal of Communication*, 15 (4), 469-500. DOI: 10.1177/0267323100015004002.
- Voltmer, K. (Ed). (2006). *Mass media and political communication in new democracies*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (1999). Ensuring richness and diversity of representation in the public sphere: Mass media as forums for democratic debate. *Journal of the Northwest Communication Association*, 24-52.
- Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (2001). Letters to the editor as a forum for public deliberation: Modes of publicity and democratic debate. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 18, 303-320.

- Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (2002a). The construction of the public in letters to the editor: Deliberative democracy and the idiom of insanity. *Journalism*, 3 (2), 183-204.
- Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (2002b). Understanding the conditions for public discourse: four rules for selecting letters to the editor. *Journalism Studies*, 3 (1), 69-81.
- Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (2007). *Journalists and the public: Newsroom culture, letters to the editor, and democracy*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (2008). Disgust, pleasure and the failure of the liberal democratic model: tabloid talk, media capital and emotional citizenship. *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*, 4 (2), 145-161.
- Waisbord, S. (2007). Democratic journalism and 'statelessness'. *Political Communication*, 24, 115-129.
- Walsh, K. C. (2004). *Talking about politics: informal groups and social identity in American life*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press.
- Warner, J. (2007). Political culture jamming: The dissident humor of *The Daily Show With Jon Stewart*. *Popular Communication*, 5 (1), 17-36.
- Warner, M. (2002). *Publics & Counterpublics*. New York: Zone books.
- Way, L. A. (2005). Authoritarian state building and the sources of regime competitiveness in the fourth wave: The cases of Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine. *World Politics*, 57, 231-61.
- Wegren, S. K., & Konitzer, A. (2007). Prospects for managed democracy in Russia. *Europe-Asia Studies*. 59 (6), 1025-1047.

- Weigle, M. A. (2002). On the road to the civic forum: State and civil society from Yeltsin to Putin. *Demokratizatsiya* 10 (2), 117-146.
- Weiss, G., & Wodak, R. (Eds.). (2003). *Critical discourse analysis: Theory and interdisciplinarity*. Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Welsh, S. (2002). Deliberative democracy and the rhetorical production of political culture. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 5(4): 679-708.
- Welzel, Ch., & Inglehart, R. (2006). Emancipative values and democracy; response to Hadenius and Teorell. *Studies in Comparative International Development* 41 (3), 74-94.
- Welzel, Ch., & Inglehart, R. (2008). The role of ordinary people in democratization. *Journal of Democracy*, 19 (1), 126- 140.
- White, S. (1984). Political culture in Communist states: Some problems of theory and method. *Comparative Politics*, 16 (3), 351-365.
- White, S. (2002). Ten years on, What do the Russians think? *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 18 (1), 35-50.
- White, S. (2005). Political disengagement in post-communist Russia: A qualitative study. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 57 (8), 1121-1142.
- Whitehead, L. (2002). *Democratization: Theory and Experience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wierzbicka, A. (1990). Anti-totalitarian language in Poland: Some mechanisms of linguistic self-defense. *Language and Society*, 19, 1-59.

- Williams, D. C., Ishiyama, J.T., Young, M.J., & Launer, M.K. (1997). The role of public argument in emerging democracies: A case study of the 12 December 1993 election in the Russian federation. *Argumentation 11*, (1997) 179-194.
- Williams, D.C., & Hazen, M. D. (Eds.). (1990). *Argumentation theory and the rhetoric of assent*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- Wilson, A. (2005). *Virtual politics: Faking democracy in the post-Soviet world*. News Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Wober, J.M. (2004). Top people write to the Times. *British Journalism Review*, 15 (2), 49-54.
- Wodak, R. (1995). Critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis. In J. Verschueren, J-O. Ostman, & J. Blommaert (Eds.), *Handbook of Pragmatics Manual* (pp. 204–210). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Wodak, R. (Ed.) (1989). *Language, power and ideology*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (Eds.). (2001). *Methods of critical discourse analysis*. London, Thousand Oaks et al: Sage Publications.
- Wolfe, Th. C. (2005). *Governing Soviet journalism: The press and the socialist person after Stalin*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Wolin, S. (1990). Democracy in the discourse of postmodernism. *Social Research*, 57, 5-30.
- Wolin, S. (2008). *Democracy incorporated: Managed democracy and the specter of inverted totalitarianism*. Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press.

- Wooley, J.T. (2000). Using media-based data in studies of politics. *American Journal of Political Science*, 44 (1), 156-173.
- Worth, O. (2009). Unraveling the Putin myth: Strong or weak Caesar? *Politics*, 29 (1), 53-61.
- Wyatt, R. O., Katz, E., & Kim, J. (2000). Bridging the spheres: Political and personal conversation in public and private spaces. *Journal of Communication* 50 (1), 71-92.
- Yekelchik, S. (2006). The civic duty to hate: Stalinist citizenship as political practice and civic emotion. *Kritika: Exploration in Russian and Eurasian History*, 7 (3), 529-556
- Young, I. M. (2000). *Inclusion and democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Young, M.J., & Launer, M.K. (2002). The final days: The development of argumentative discourse in the Soviet Union. *Argumentation*, 16, 443-458.
- Yurchak, A. (2003). Soviet hegemony of form: Everything was forever, until it was no more. *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History*, 480-510.
- Zaslavsky, V., & Fabris, M. (1982). Leksika neravenstva -- k probleme razvitiia russkogo iazyka v sovetkii period. *Revue des Etudes Slaves*, 54 (3), 387-401.
- Zassoursky, I. (2004). *Media and power in post-soviet Russia*. Armonk, NY & London: M.E. Sharpe.
- Zbenovich, C. (2007). Communication modes: The fabric of the post-Soviet political interview (1991-1999). *Journal of Language and Politics*, 6 (1), 75-90.

- Zemskaya, E.A. (1996). Zitiia i vidy ee transformatsii v zagolovkakh sovremennykh gazet. In N.N. Rozanova (Ed.), *Poetika, stilistika, iazyk i kultura. Pamyati Tatiany Grigorevny Vinokur* (pp. 157-169). Moskva: Nauka.
- Zemskaya, E.A., & Novikov, L.A. (1993). *Russkii iazyk v ego funktsionirovanii: Kommunikativno-pragmaticheskii aspekt*. Moskva: Nauka.
- Zemtsov, I. (1985). *Sovetskii politicheskii iazyk*. London: Overseas Publications Interchange.
- Zhuravskaya, E. (2007). Whither Russia? A review of Andrew Shleifer's *A normal Country*. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 45, 127-146.
- Zimmerman, W. (1995). Synoptic thinking in post-Soviet Russia. *Slavic Review* 54 (3), 630-641.
- Zimmerman, W. (2002). *The Russian people and foreign policy: Russian elite and mass perspectives, 1993-2000*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Zizek, S. (1989). *The sublime object of ideology*. New York: Verso.
- Zizek, S. (2006). *The parallax view*. Cambridge MA & London: The MIT Press.
- Znatov, A. (Ed.). (2005). *Kak my dumali v 2004 godu: Rossia na pereputje*. Moskva: Eksmo & Algoritm.
- Zweynert, J. (2007). Conflicting patterns of thought in Russian debate on transition: 1992-2002. *Europe-Asia Studies* 59 (1), 47-69.

VITA

Natalia Vasilyevna Kovalyova holds her undergraduate degree in Foreign Languages from Kubanskiy State University (Krasnodar, Russia) and Master's degree in Education from The University of Massachusetts, Amherst. In August 2004 she entered The Graduate School of The University of Texas at Austin to pursue a doctorate in Communication Studies with an emphasis in Rhetoric and Language.

Permanent Address: 26 Granitnaya Street, Apt. 80, St. Petersburg, Russia, 213195.

This dissertation was typed by the author.