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BULLDOG MOTHERS, RABID WORKER-BEES, AND WHITE RAVENS:
WOMEN'S GENDER DISSENT IN LATE SOVIET RUSSIA

Master's Thesis

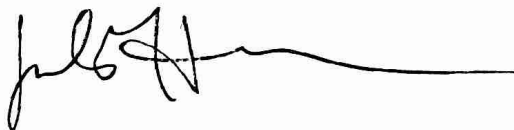
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ABSTRACT

This thesis conceptualizes gender dissent and explores proposed examples of it among women in late Soviet Russia. Through surveying theories of dissent/resistance and gender under a postmodernist lens, I conclude that people may use gender to dissent against political organizations and/or social norms through subverting, disobeying, and/or using for their own purposes norms of gender. In late Soviet Russia, two systems of gender norms existed, one the official order elaborated by the state and the other the societal one based more on traditional, prerevolutionary Russian values; these two orders simultaneously conflicted with, interfered with, and upheld each other. Women were therefore able to dissent against the regime, society, or both by subtly fighting against these varied norms. Through a review of primary and secondary sources, I found that women were expected to adhere to a set of contradictory gender “rules”: working outside the home, believing themselves equal to men, having children, being married, housekeeping and raising children, upholding communist morality, participating in society, having certain characteristics such as modesty, passivity, and an understanding of human nature and emotions, being self-sacrificing, and taking care of their appearances. Through a study of Russian women’s memoirs written during or about the period between 1964 and 1985, I concluded that women could dissent against these norms in several broad categories including identity, sexuality, and “femininity” or the lack thereof. The women generally dissented very subtly, often by using one gender discourse to support behavior that infringed upon another gender order, and were not consistently “dissentive” in their discourse or actions. I found broad participation in gender dissent among the sample of women studied, and while my results are not generalizable, my data revealed that gender dissent as a concept is traceable in late Soviet Russia.

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1. Introduction

This thesis explores women's gender expression, performance, and conceptions and their use as a form of everyday dissent in late Soviet Russia. The late Soviet era starts with Brezhnev's rise to power (1964) and ends with Gorbachev's (1985); this was a concrete period characterized by mild totalitarianism, increased consumerism, and diminished emphasis on communist ideology. There were significant developments regarding gender: one was the admission that the "woman question"—the fact that women in socialist society were expected to both work and take care of the children and household matters, but that this made their lives extremely difficult—had not been solved; a second was the increasingly overt, official support for the doctrine of biological essentialism, which states that men and women have biologically based physical and psychological differences and that these should be taken into account when determining the treatment and roles of men and women in law and everyday life (Attwood 1990, Buckley 1989, Lapidus 1978).

The theoretical portion of this study is grounded in the concept of everyday dissent: forms of dissent that operate outside the structure of an organized movement and do not aim for massive institutional change yet have significance to wider society or those directly involved. I also draw on theories of gender, including those of the gender order, performativity, and subversion; and those of the postmodern subject. Gender dissent, a partially new concept elaborated in this thesis, is a subcategory of everyday dissent defined as presenting and/or conceiving of oneself in ways that do not accord with society's gender norms or explicit ideology of gender, or sometimes more simply thinking or believing in different notions of gender.

This is a single case study. Because it focuses on establishing a concept and showing whether and in what ways the concept existed in reality, it is sufficient to focus on one society. I focus my research on Russia because as the heart of the Soviet Union, Russia is a natural place to begin research into this phenomenon in the area; much previous research focuses on Russia, and there is a wide range of secondary literature on Russia. I chose the late Soviet period because the stability of the era might have allowed people to feel increasingly comfortable with gender dissent, as they might have been in other areas of their lives. This period was also when the dissident movement developed, so it is possible that other forms of dissent developed simultaneously.

The aim of this research is to uncover, analyze, and discuss the significance of gender dissent among women in late Soviet Russia, and to explore gender dissent theoretically as a mode of dissent. This study does not have a hypothesis but investigates these research questions:

- How did Russian women explore gender in non-state-sanctioned and/or non-society-sanctioned ways in the late Soviet Union?
- Can nonconformity and nontraditional everyday thoughts and experiences of gender be considered dissent in the Soviet Union, where there were strict models of behavior and where individual identity was meant to be subjugated to the collective?

I will also comment more briefly on these broader questions:

- How can women use gender to expand life possibilities under repression and live in a way that disregards hegemonic social structures?
- Can this type of dissent have any meaning for society beyond the individuals involved?

While exploring research questions rather than attempting to prove a hypothesis may seem atypical in traditional academic contexts, it fits in well with postmodern and constructivist research, in which tradition this thesis finds itself. These questions will be explored through discourse analyses performed upon excerpts from primary sources, mainly memoirs.

This thesis contributes to previous scholarship that has disrupted stereotyped notions of Soviet womanhood and shown the multiplicity and variance in the lives of Soviet and post-Soviet Russian women (e.g. Bridger, Kay, and Pinnick 1995; Buckley

1997; Johnson and Robinson 2007; Penn and Massino 2009; Stella 2015). However, I will study these women from a different perspective: through alternative experiences of gender. There are few studies of how women practice dissent, or of forms of dissent that are unique to women. Most such studies are about contemporary East Asian or Middle Eastern societies (e.g. Abu-Lughod 1990; Amireh 2012; MacLeod 1992; Ong 1987; Richter-Devroe 2011; Riessman 2000). This thesis will expand such research into Soviet Russia. My study will bring a new dimension to the concept of dissent, particularly the subcategory of everyday dissent, through making a detailed conceptualization of gender dissent; it may also add a new dimension to theories of gender performativity and subversion. This is relevant to women's studies, Soviet studies, and scholarship on dissent. This thesis is further relevant because contemporary Russia is quite restrictive in terms of gender: exploring the historical background for this phenomenon may shed light on the current situation and provide a valuable precursor to future research on gender dissent in the CIS and worldwide.

This thesis has several limitations: There are few explicit references to dissent in the sources I analyze; thus this study is quite interpretive and may open itself to questions of validity. To combat this limitation, I have been transparent about my methods and interpretive criteria in the methodology chapter. Another possible limitation is that I am not fluent in Russian; however, my language skills were sufficient to read both Russian primary sources and academic articles.

The structure of this thesis is as follows. In the second chapter, I discuss theories on how societies uphold and reproduce gender norms, and how gender is conceived of and subverted individually. I then provide historical background and describe and discuss explicit Soviet gender ideology and societal gender norms. In the third chapter, I explicate theories of dissent and review literature on Soviet dissent. In the fourth chapter, I discuss the possibilities for gender dissent, both theoretically and in the Soviet context; review the literature on this phenomenon; and conceptualize gender dissent. In the fifth chapter, I discuss my methodology of postmodernism and discourse analysis, explain my discovery and usage of sources, describe how I produced and organized my data, and present the final data. In the sixth chapter, I interpret selections from this data. In the seventh chapter, I discuss these findings and tie them back into the discussion about dissent. In the eighth chapter, I present a brief conclusion.

2. Gender: Theoretical Frames and Soviet History

2.1 GENDER THEORIES: PATRIARCHY AND PERFORMATIVITY

I begin this chapter with a discussion of theories of gender: those more broad, about society's involvement in gender roles, and those more personal, about the individual construction of gender and the self.

2.1.1 Gender Structures

According to Raewyn Connell, the gender order is the “historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women and definitions of femininity and masculinity” (1987, 99). The gender order is manifested in “*all* types of institutions” and comprises a series of smaller “gender regimes” (ibid., 120). Liljeström’s definition states that the gender system is a “hierarchically organized relation of male dominance and female subordination, which is produced and reproduced in a complex, multi-originated and multi-dimensional process, inseparable from structures, institutions and different forms of practice in society” (1993, 163). The gender structure is part of Bourdieu’s habitus, reproducing itself through people’s being “subjected to ... conditionings” (Bourdieu 1977, 85). All societies have an overarching gender system composed of parts brought in from different institutions and relationships; the variances and overlaps among these “gender regimes” add to the complexity of modern gendered life. I use the term “gender structure” and “gender structures” throughout, meaning a modified form of Connell’s term: for Connell, societies have one gender order; in my

version, I refer to multiple gender orders/structures to show how a society can have two or more different, fully formed, fully accepted structures for gendered life.

Patriarchy is the type of gender order that prevails in most of the world. In this gender order, women are inherently inferior (Liljeström 1993, 166). The basic tenets of a patriarchal society are that women are dependent on men, inferior, and weak; their greatest virtues are their inherent characteristics of being selfless, loving, and patient (Gert 1999, 7).¹ Women are always the Other (ibid.); men are the default type of human being. The social contract in patriarchies depends on men's equality and women's exclusion and repression (Nartova 2008, 1). Patriarchy is a social structure "both autonomous from other social formations and dependent on them" (Mojab 2012, 412). This is why some states have relatively solid programs of equal rights for women but still, in the background, support and uphold patriarchy (ibid., 410). Patriarchy exists not as a single locus of power but like Foucault's postmodern power (see section 3.1.2): it asserts itself through discourse (Litosseliti and Sunderland 2002, 4) as much as it does through men's control over institutions (Millett 1977, 25).

The system of sexual difference is extraordinarily significant socially and psychologically. Bourdieu finds that "the opposition between masculinity and femininity ... constitutes the fundamental principle of division of the social and symbolic world" (Bourdieu 1977, 93): in his theory of the social world, he accords prime importance to gender. It is difficult to overcome the patriarchy, even mentally: "the category of sex is a totalitarian one ... It shapes the mind as well as the body since it controls all mental production. It grips our minds in such a way that we cannot think outside of it" (Wittig 1992, 8). Millett notes that "sexual politics obtains consent through the 'socialization' of both sexes to basic patriarchal politics with regard to temperament, role, and status" (1977, 26)—women often assent to patriarchy, subconsciously or otherwise, because it is such a strong social force.

2.1.2 Postmodernism and Gender Performativity

Postmodernism² contains the notion of the fragmented, shifting self. This idea posits that people do not have "secure, unitary identit[ies]" but rather consist of

¹ All translations from the Russian are mine, except where noted.

² A fuller explanation of the use of postmodernism in this thesis can be found in section 5.2.

multiple selves that are constantly being created and shifting (Alvesson 2002, 50). Early postmodernists such as Foucault wrote of the “death of the subject” (Sheehan 2004, 32): the self is not a single, complete entity but is constantly changing, growing, and being created as it narrates and performs itself (Kristeva 1986, 26; Sheehan 2004, 33). This postmodern construction of identity is particularly relevant to marginalized groups, including women, as it allows “aspects of each person to resist a dominant discourse and enter another” (Alvesson 2002, 51). The theory has also been strongly influenced by feminist philosophy. According to Braidotti, “each real-life woman (n.b. not ‘*Woman*’) or female feminist subject is a multiplicity in herself: slit, fractured ... not one conscious subject” (1994, 165). This fragmentation is both inevitable and necessary for survival (Ortner 1995): women need individual lives in order to mentally and emotionally survive, but they also need to play feminine gender roles—do the housework, make dinner—to physically survive. Because of this need to survive, many women have contradictory ideas about gender simultaneously.

While patriarchy assumes that gender is fixed and immutable, modern theories take gender to be more complicated. People tend to be treated in society on the basis of their binary, outwardly observable gender, but the way people experience and project their gender on a daily basis can vary. According to Butler, “what we take to be an internal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body ... what we take to be an ‘internal’ feature of ourselves is one that we anticipate and produce through certain bodily acts” (1999, xv): people present their genders in different ways according to circumstance, and it is this presentation that actually constitutes gender, not any inherent quality (ibid., 33). I use Butler in this thesis as a general framework for understanding gender and identity; I will not perform a Butlerian analysis of my subjects’ gender identities, but I do use her theories as my starting point for how women may construct and live in their gender(s), and to show a widely accepted theory of gender that is also completely different from the Soviet version. Butler’s theories of identity are particularly important in this thesis because the discourses of the women studied here shift throughout their narratives; but rather than the women being seen as contradictory or unsure of themselves, they should be seen as people negotiating their identities, including their gender(s), as a condition of living in society.

2.2 GENDER HISTORY IN THE SOVIET UNION

I turn now to a discussion of gender in the Soviet Union. I start with a historical overview of the original goals of the communist movement as regards women in order to provide historical context. I then describe the policies, ideologies, and social norms concerning gender during the Brezhnev era, showing how these early goals morphed. I will use this latter section to codify a set of “requirements” unofficially placed on women by society and the regime, against which they can dissent.

I divide the Brezhnev-era gender order into two separate gender structures, the official—legal or otherwise endorsed by the regime, or “those activities and institutions that pursue social and national goals” (Shlapentokh 1989, 3)—and the unofficial—those propagated by society as a whole—rather than describing them as two parts of one overarching gender order. I follow Shlapentokh’s definition of “public,” which he sees as a synonym for “official” (4). My “unofficial” structure is the overlapping portion of all private individuals/organizations, the majority view—similar to Shlapentokh’s third level in the social hierarchy, above individuals and families but below the state (6). Using this division allows me to more clearly show how the major themes of each were different and how overall they simultaneously opposed and supported each other. This division mirrors the way many sociologists and historians discuss Soviet life: as Shlapentokh writes, “The distinction between the public and private spheres is of crucial importance for understanding Soviet society” (1989, 3). The public and the private kept different spheres, and people were required to obey both official mandates and private/unofficial ones in order to be considered “normal” members of society (Kharkhordin 1999, Yurchak 2005). This official/unofficial, public/private, rhetorical/actual divide in Soviet life was present in gender, as gender is a social structure; so it makes sense to treat it similarly to how other Soviet social structures are treated.

2.2.1 The Bolshevik Gender Program

Before the Bolshevik Revolution, the vast majority of Russian women were peasants living in similar conditions to those the serfs had: most were poor, were rarely allowed to own property, and had little if any education, and many endured domestic

violence (Clements 2012, 112–130). The social order, particularly that of peasant society, was quite rigid, with marriage being nearly obligatory and a strict hierarchy being observed in which women were required to obey men (ibid., 100–2). When the Bolsheviks took power, gender was a significant component of their revolutionary program. Major early Bolshevik thinkers including Lenin, Trotsky, and Aleksandra Kollontai intended women to take new places in society after the revolution. They would become politically aware, work, and contribute to society. Laundry, meal preparation, and childcare would be done at special facilities, freeing women from major burdens. Kollontai believed that the unit of the family would eventually break up altogether, with children being cared for by the state (Kollontai 1918, 21–24). Motherhood would be not a private function but a social duty (Kollontai 1972a and b).

The revolution and the years following did see many women learn to read, enter the workforce, and be “emancipated,” as the Bolsheviks framed it. Yet women were seen less as a social group in need of equal rights and more as a means of shoring up revolutionary support, and as a result, the majority of the gendered portion of the revolutionary program faded (Lapidus 1978, 9). Emancipation—rights—took a backseat to the regime’s needs.

Ultimately, much of the prerevolutionary gender order was maintained throughout the life of the Soviet Union. The promised crèches, laundromats, and cafeterias were too expensive to build in sufficient quantity, so women continued to be responsible for household matters. Because they were also expected to work, the double burden was cemented into Soviet life. Women were both workers and mothers (Temkina and Rotkirch 2002, 8), required to perform “production and reproduction” (Buckley 1989, 163). Family relations remained in some ways ideologically similar to their prerevolutionary counterparts: the regime had little incentive to change individual patriarchal attitudes, since if women took care of domestic matters the regime was able to spend its money and time on “bigger” issues. The patriarchy was imperative to the continued functioning of the Soviet project.

2.2.2 The Brezhnev Era and Official Gender Structures

A closer examination of gender during the Brezhnev era will show both the context the women in this study lived within and how gender ideologies morphed over

the course of the life of the Soviet Union.³ I start with official gender structures, and then move on to unofficial ones. The Brezhnev era is notable for several major areas of gender policy and ideology. For one, Brezhnev declared that the woman question had not, as had earlier been asserted, been solved—that there were still many problems in women’s lives. This opened the stage for discussion of women’s issues, among both social scientists and society at large (Buckley 1989, 161). While arguments about women’s roles were less radical than they had been in the 1920s, they were at least happening again (*ibid.*, 188).

The 1971 Party Congress mentioned women explicitly, unlike the 1966 one, saying that “the goal of party policy is for Soviet women to have new opportunities regarding childrearing, participation in society, recreation, and study” (Buckley 1989, 165). The 1976 Congress reinforced this claim, saying that “the party considers it its duty to exercise constant concern over women, to improve their situation as participants in the workforce, mothers, childrearing, and housekeepers” (Dvornikov and Stepichev 1977; Buckley 1989, 165). The order of roles has changed slightly: in 1971, women are “childrearing” first, whereas in 1976 “mothers” and “childrearing” are only second and third, respectively, but women have lost their opportunities for recreation and study. The official gender contract of the period was still that of the working mother, yet media rhetoric stated that women’s reproductive role was more important: “her other, most important obligation for society—raising the younger generation” (Vecheslova 1969).

The second major gender development was the newly popular idea that gender differences were “scientific truth ... immutable, biologically and not socially created” (Engel 1992, 317). The rise in divorce rates and drop in birthrate of the 1970s (Pilkington 1992, 208; Attwood 1990, ix) increased the strength and utility of this belief in “biology”: society was concerned that women’s “emancipation” had caused these changes through the feminization of men and the masculinization of women (Liljeström 1993, 165), the changes from prerevolutionary ideals of gender. As the 1970s continued, an “increasing polarity between the ideological constructions of femininity and masculinity” was transferred to society through school sex education, pedagogical writings, and propaganda (*ibid.*, 164–169). Girls were taught that they should be

³ A very brief history of the Brezhnev period can be found in Appendix 1.

passive, shy, and modest, whereas men were active, reasoning, and logical (ibid.). A high school course, the Ethics and Psychology of Family Life, aimed to get high school students to want to have more children and to prompt girls to be more “feminine and housewifely” (Belskaya, quoted in Atwood 1990, 184; see also 184–191). Children’s readers presented women “in situations that emphasize their maternal roles. Men, by contrast, are portrayed in a broad range of activities almost exclusively outside the home” (Lapidus 1978, 143).

The differences between men and women were not just in roles—workers versus mothers—but also in psychological characteristics. In the children’s readers, “men are depicted as active, confident, ambitious for advancement, and politically involved, while women are portrayed as passive, expressive, supportive, nurturing, unconcerned with advancement” (Lapidus 1978, 143). Because women were supposedly better at handling emotions and taking care of people, they were suited for being mothers and raising children. The loving, self-sacrificing wife and mother was presented as a heroine, a Soviet superwoman (Temkina and Rotkirch 2002, 12). Gender differences were seen as mandatory to the preserving of communist morality (Liljeström 1993, 166). This ideology, “based on the principle of the ‘healthy Soviet family’ and communist and administrative morality, became an effective tool for controlling the behaviour of Soviet citizens, particularly women” (Milewska-Pindor 2013, 16): women were presented as essential for the preservation of Soviet society, but they had to behave in very regimented ways in order to do this.

The regime justified its different treatment of men and women by stating that “equal” did not mean “identical”—in direct opposition to earlier communist ideas in which women were aggregated with men on the basis of class, under the assumption that class was more important than gender (Buckley 1989, 33). Women’s rights now had to be different because of their biological differences (Lapidus 1978, 126). Many inequalities in Soviet society were reinforced by biological essentialism. Women usually worked in fields supposedly tailored to their nature, such as the textile and garment industries, health care, and teaching (Pilkington 1992, 191), which were less well paid and less prestigious (Clements 1991, 274; Lapidus 1978, 195); they occupied only the lower roles, with men taking on the better paid, more prestigious management positions. Legislation further circumscribed the types of work that women were allowed

to do: the 1970 labor law prevented women from doing heavy or dangerous work, work night shifts, and work overtime if they were pregnant or had young children (Pilkington 1992, 202).

The regime and society continued to consider solely women responsible for domestic chores (Clements 2012, 259); few attempts were made to change these views. Discussion of easing the double burden focused on the idea of giving women the option of working part-time (Buckley 1989, 169). Brezhnev said in 1977 that “we men are indebted to [women] ... we have still done far from everything to ease the double burden” (Buckley 1989, 182), but the state’s rhetoric was all about easing the burden by improving social services rather than advocating equality in the home, thus leaving the remaining burden squarely on women’s shoulders (ibid., 168). During the Brezhnev era, light industry did not improve much; there were not enough stores or goods, and shopping took hours, making women’s lives more difficult (McKinney 2004, 38-39; Milewska-Pindor 2013, 17).

Despite the state’s rhetoric about supporting women as mothers, conditions in maternity hospitals were abysmal. Accounts from the late Soviet era describe traumatic, abusive conditions in maternity wards (Voznesenskaya 1991; Arbatova 1998; Hansson and Lidén 1983; Mamonova 1984; H. Scott 1982). Even in the one role that women alone were responsible for, the role that they were supposedly valued for, they were treated poorly. As Maria Arbatova put it, “To be a woman in this world is not honorable, even in that moment that you do the only thing that men are not capable of” (1997, 60).

Brezhnev-era legislation also aimed to help only mothers and/or wives—not women as such (Pilkington 1992, 205). There were no attempts to combat sexual harassment (ibid., 202) or domestic violence (Milewska-Pindor 2013, 19). Contraception was almost entirely unavailable, so most women had to rely on abortions for birth control, and conditions in abortion facilities were just as bad as or worse than those in maternity wards (Arbatova 1998; Hansson and Lidén 1983; Mamonova 1984).

Women were almost entirely absent from high-level politics, and thus could not contribute to legislation or help define their own roles: they never comprised more than 5 percent of the Central Committee and were extremely underrepresented in regional party committees (Pilkington 1992, 216). Men were the ones to define women’s roles,

but their “main interest has almost always been the relation between the state and men” (Greene 1987, 127).

There was a small Soviet feminist movement composed of two opposing strands: that emulating Western feminism, symbolized by the samizdat (self-published) publication *Almanach: Woman and Russia*, and that more traditionally Russian (see Chatterjee 1999), symbolized by *Mariya* (Marsh 1996, 286). *Woman and Russia*, led by Tat’yana Mamonova, aimed to fight the “patriarchal social order and its psychology” (Milewska-Pindor 2013, 12); *Mariya* arose from the religious feminist movement, which emphasized women’s pure spirituality and superiority to men through their feminine virtues (Buckley 1986a). Most of the leaders of these movements were summoned to the KGB for “friendly chats” and later forced to emigrate (Clements 1991, 277); some spent time in prison camps, which demonstrates the regime’s fear of feminism (Lapidus 1983, xiv). Many women who lived dissentively, such as Yelena Grigor’evna, who now runs an LGBT archive in Moscow, were not interested in participating in the movement: “I didn’t see any possibilities of changing the existing situation of things, and the activities of the dissidents seemed, if not harmful, then senseless” (Grigor’evna 2002, 4).

Overall, in the Brezhnev-era official gender order, women were inferior. Even if we assume that the Soviet Union’s policies were meant to provide them with equitable treatment—which is debatable—the fact remains that women’s lives were extremely difficult in the Soviet Union, and difficult in many ways that men did not have to deal with.⁴

2.2.3 The Unofficial Gender Structure

I turn now to a discussion of unofficial gender structures: the rules and norms that society upheld, with or without the participation of the regime. While the regime’s gender requirements and social gender norms overlapped, there were also significant portions of each that were not upheld by the other. Many parts of the “unofficial” Soviet gender structure derived from prerevolutionary traditions that remained enmeshed in society. The regime’s official gendered policies could change much more quickly than

⁴ Yet see also Chatterjee 1999 for a valuable counterpoint.

society's did. So while society did uphold the parts of the regime's gender structure that they had become fully socialized into, and the regime upheld through law parts of society's gender structure, in other realms they had their own, separate norms. I distinguish between the regime's and society's gender structures to highlight the importance of these differences and show how they interacted.

Most of the information in this section is taken from primary sources, many the same as those that were used in data production (see chapter 4). This is anecdotal evidence, backed up by the secondary literature, but the speakers present their views as normal, unremarkable, and common; it gives us an idea of the gender structures they were steeped in.

There is a sharp contrast between the Soviet constitution's insistence on equality and the maintenance of inequality-engendering social roles in the unofficial gender order. Women were expected to accord with traditional social norms of behavior, not only those the regime upheld; these sometimes meshed and were sometimes at odds, and women had to negotiate these two modes. Despite the early Bolshevik ideals about women's roles, Soviet society never managed to break free of patriarchy: "the political and cultural dimensions of sex roles ... have proven more persistent and less responsive to economic arrangements than was anticipated" (Lapidus 1978, 195; see also Baranova 2015 and Pilkington 1992). Women struggled to be recognized as equal—that is, when they themselves even wanted to be equal to men—and there is ample evidence of their being treated as inferior to men.

The distinction between the regime-enabled patriarchy and societal-enabled patriarchy is particularly clear when we look at power relations that operate beyond the state—the smaller sites of power that each person performs daily. The regime's rhetoric and laws kept women responsible for housework and childcare and codified them as wives and mothers rather than autonomous people; and Soviet citizens on a daily, individual basis also upheld a gender structure that, while interacting with and reinforced by the state, simultaneously operated separately.

A common image of the "ideal woman" did not conform to state ideology. The ideal woman, according to society, was supposed to be "even-tempered ... kind and friendly, and an agreeable conversationalist," and spend time on her appearance (Anna in Hansson and Lidén 1983, 44); be "calm, controlled, and hav[e] a friendly disposition

... [be] soft, calm, considerate” (Sonya in *ibid.*, 65); “she must know how to make herself beautiful” (Liza in *ibid.*, 18); “be gentle, tender—and lively! ... an ability to bring out the attractive qualities within oneself and hide the bad ones ... and of course she has to take care of her appearance” (Masha in *ibid.*, 76). Several Soviet social scientists produced similar statements: “The woman is tender and sentimental. She is soft and kind” (Anna in Buckley 1986b, 17); “women should remain kind and gentle” (Olga in *ibid.*, 83); “The woman should keep her femininity and that helps to keep the family strong” (Katya in *ibid.*, 60). It was sometimes assumed that women wanted to keep their traditional roles: “Just try to find a housekeeper who would want to live without exercising her strength on housekeeping, without raising her kids? But we need to help mothers” (Boguslavskaya 1981)—Boguslavskaya seems to want to help mothers (women) in spite of what she assumes they want.

While women were nominally equal, their husbands, coworkers, and sometimes they themselves expected their household and children to come first. The writer Krutikova-Abramova wrote of her husband, “We both sat at writing desks, for the first time in our house seriously doing literary work ... the idea came to us of building a new house or maybe a working study where Fyodor could ensconce himself, concentrate, so that the household matters wouldn’t disturb him” (1988, 127). Both of them are involved in serious writerly pursuits, but it is the man’s prerogative to shut himself off from the functioning of the household, and Krutikova-Abramova supports this small gender order. In Natal’ya Baranskaya’s short story “Nedelya kak Nedelya,” the narrator’s husband refuses to help her take care of their children that night, saying that he wanted to read; when the narrator says she, too, wants to read, he responds, “Well, that’s your business, but I need to” (1989, 309), showing that even in a reasonably equitable marriage, the children are still the women’s responsibility, whereas the man has the luxury of free time.

A traditional gender order was upheld on the personal level in the work sphere, as well. Galina Kulikovskaya writes about a female factory worker who was promoted to be head of a men’s brigade because of her excellent work: “They absolutely did not like that a girl had been assigned as their boss. In the mornings Lusia would give out jobs, and they would say: ‘I won’t,’ ‘do it yourself,’ ‘I’m a boss too’—and they would add some offensive words” (1976, 23). Equality was not observed even in the location

where women's emancipation supposedly took place—there was conflict between official and societal gender norms.

Even when women's pursuits outside the home were valued, these were sometimes seen as just a vehicle for improved performance at home, which suggests that women had equality in actions but not on a deeper level: "Their participation in work, in social life, enables their development on all sides, helps them in family and household matters" (Dvornikov and Stepichev 1977). Women were expected to put others before their own needs more generally, too: "a genuine socialist woman should organise her life ... to bring happiness to others and to help others ... a broader role for women which subsumes [worker and mother] is that of bringing benefit to society in general" (Katya in Buckley 1986b, 56).

Based on the official regime gender structure and the unofficial societal structure, I have codified a series of "requirements" placed on women, loosely categorized by which gender structure they derive primarily from:

State

- "Production" (working)
- Upholding communist morality
- Participating in society

Society

- Being sociable, friendly, agreeable, and people-oriented
- Being modest, passive, and shy
- Being emotional (as opposed to rational)
- Taking care of appearance

Both

- Being a wife and housekeeper
- Reproduction (having children)
- Raising the children
- Sacrificing the self for the good of society and the family

This thesis will show how women dissented against (some of) these requirements.

3. Dissent: Theories and Soviet Practices

I now move to my discussion of dissent, which will allow me to explain why and how the abovementioned requirements can be dissented against. In order to arrive at a theory of gender dissent (see chapter 4), it is necessary to first elaborate a definition of dissent. This chapter will survey various conceptions of dissent, both to provide an overview of research in the field and to elucidate how I have arrived at my own definition of dissent. At the end, I will provide an overview of research into Soviet dissent.

3.1 TYPES OF DISSENT

There is no standard definition of dissent or dissidence; meanings vary by country, field, and individual. There is also not much semantic consistency: *dissent*, *resistance*, and *dissidence* are often used interchangeably, though there are differences. *Resistance* is usually more active—economic sabotage and on-the-job foot-dragging (J. Scott 1985), plus political opposition; whereas *dissent* can be more ideological and internal, including people's thoughts and conceptions that don't fit into either society or the regime's norms. *Dissidence* is usually a more restricted phenomenon: it requires distinct activity with a particular political goal, usually within a formal movement. Healey (2001, 2002), in his study of the Stalin era, uses *dissent* to describe resistance that is based on identity. However, Ong (1987), MacLeod (1992), and Riessman (2000) write extensively about similar behaviors, and they call it *resistance*; Mojab (2012) uses the terms interchangeably. Viola (2000; 2002) uses *resistance* when discussing nonnormative behaviors in the Stalin era, but these do tend to be more active. She doesn't provide a

definition for resistance, noting that “resistance is not fixed and should not be fixed, lest we risk repeating traditional simplifications and reducing state and society formations to unitary, monolithic, and homogeneous entities rather than the complex and highly unstable structures that they were” (2002, 3). Fitzpatrick (1994), in her study of resistance to collectivization, uses the term “resistance” throughout, though once describes as “dissidence” a young woman expressing her support for abortion—in defiance of both state law and peasant society’s popular opinion. (See also Kozlov 2011 and Nathans 2015 for further discussion of terminology.) I use the word *dissent* because it is more common in the Soviet context and thus ties my research into the wider research on Soviet dissent.

3.1.1 Anti-Regime Dissent

Anti-regime dissent is a broad phenomenon that encompasses but is not limited to dissidence, though many theoreticians confine their discussion of dissent to dissidence and deny that subpolitical behaviors can be considered dissent. The most restrictive definition of dissent reserves the term for politically active people. Kozlov states that “there were many other kinds of social and cultural phenomena, lacking names of their own, for which the terms ‘nonconformist’ [*inakomyslyashchym*—Kozlov 2002, 75] or ‘dissident’ [*dissidentom*—*ibid.*] are obviously not appropriate” (Kozlov 2011, 25), reserving “dissident” and “dissent” for politically active people. Yurchak refuses to call “dissidents” anyone except those who actively “practice[d] dissent” (2005, 107): people who did not believe in the regime’s ideology but did not take action in response to their unbelief were not “dissenters.” Shlapentokh mentions the “imitation of oppositional activity,” suggesting that an occasional antiregime activity within an overall context of regime support is not actually dissent (1990, 125). There is an intermediate category of quasi-dissenters who have been called “compliant reformers” and “‘closet’ critics” (Barghoorn 1983, 133), “*dissidentsvuiushchie*” (“dissident-like people”) (Yurchak 2005, 107), and “proto-dissenters” (Jones 2014, 647). These are people who occasionally dissent against the regime and thereby contribute to an overall climate of dissent and societal plurality; it has long been debated whether they “count” as dissenters.

Others have a broader idea of dissent that still maintains certain preconditions for a person to qualify as a dissenter or their actions to qualify as dissentive. Spechler defines dissent not only according to the type of practice or thought but based on what is dissented against: she finds that dissent must involve “expression of disapproval of or exposure of serious faults in ... not a minor, but a very important, part of the apparatus of government or of its stated goals, claims, or policies” (1982, xx). Pollack and Wielgoths see dissent as being defined by its goal: it is “all discourses and activities critical of the regime that constituted, or wished to constitute, an autonomous sphere of public, political and cultural communication outside of the official institutions of the party state and which in so doing openly denied the claim of the regime to full control of public life” (2004, xiii). Thus the gravity of the goal of the action/thought, however small it was itself, could define it as dissent.

Another set of ideas about dissent focuses on the moral or internal stance of the people involved. Tókéš sees dissent as “disagreement about something ... the existence of a contrary belief or opinion expressed in the form of an alternative or, at any rate, a different position on the matter” (1975, 16). Though he uses the word “expressed,” it seems that the internal disagreement is what makes it dissent. Shtromas defines dissent more radically, as “the refusal to assent to an established or imposed set of values, goals, and ideas ... Dissent may express itself simply in the fact that the values, goals, and ideas in question are not ‘internalized’ by people whose routine social behavior is therefore motivated by a different (and mainly contrary) set of values, goals, and ideas” (1984, 717; see also Nathans 2007). Such people may not express themselves politically or have concrete goals, like those in the previous definitions of dissent, but their ability to think differently makes them dissenters.

3.1.2 Societal and Cultural Dissent

Traditional studies of dissent orient themselves toward a single central source of power that can be dissented against—a regime—and thus alternative theories of power open up space for alternative types of dissent. According to Foucault, all societies contain “manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body ... Not the domination of the King in his central position, therefore, but that of his subjects in their mutual relations: not the uniform edifice of sovereignty, but the

multiple forms of subjugation” (1980, 93–96). This power can be dissented against just as single bearers of power can, though the tools and strategies must be different. Colin Gordon notes that “a corollary of Foucault’s desubstantialisation of power is a certain desacralisation of canonical forms of resistance ... the category of resistance cannot be made to exclude its (supposedly) ‘primitive’ or ‘lumpen’ forms of manifestation” (Gordon 1980, 256). People have a variety of means of resistance/dissent at their disposal: “the existence of those who seem not to rebel is a warren of minute, individual, autonomous tactics and strategies which counter and inflect the visible facts of overall domination” (ibid., 257). The following section will discuss theories of dissent against something other than a centralized power.

James Scott provided a major new statement on the theory of dissent with his *Weapons of the Weak*, about everyday resistance, “the ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups” (1985, xvi). Such resistance is uncoordinated, individual, and nonconfrontational; its goal is basic, immediate gain, to make life more livable (ibid., 33). In Michel de Certeau’s *Practice of Everyday Life*, the masses in capitalist societies dissent against their total economic ownership by the “productive” (upper) classes. De Certeau’s key theory is “antidiscipline”: “the clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, tactical, and makeshift creativity of groups or individuals already caught in the nets of ‘discipline’” (1984, xiv). Like Scott’s peasants, who try to make their lives bearable by subtly fighting the system, de Certeau’s subjects manipulate social structures and norms through “tactics”: “calculated action[s]” that take advantage of small opportunities wherever they come up and have no greater plan beyond the winning of immediate victories” (ibid., 37). De Certeau calls these “art[s] of the weak” (ibid.). Scott’s and de Certeau’s theories expand the types of actions that can be considered dissent to those that do not aim to change society as a whole but rather defy some norm or rule for personal reasons.

Asef Bayat’s subjects, “ordinary people” living in the Muslim Middle East (Bayat 2010, ix), are able to dissent against the constraints imposed upon them in creative ways, ultimately “produc[ing] larger spaces of alternative practices and norms” (ibid., 20). These “larger spaces” are key to the idea of cultural dissent. Culture is “the more or less coherent and fluid assemblage of elements that are concrete and everyday (a gourmet menu) or ideological (religious, political), at once coming from a tradition

(that of a family or social group) and reactualized from day to day across behaviors” (Mayol 1998, 9); there are therefore infinite spaces for “pluralization,” through different behaviors within everyday life (de Certeau and Giard 1998, 256). Sunder sees cultural dissent as “challenges by individuals within a culture to modernize, or broaden, the traditional terms of cultural membership” (2001, 495; see also de Certeau 1997). More explicitly tying these practices of opening up space to dissent, he notes that people create changes in culture through “resisting or critiquing repressive cultural norms and transgressing cultural boundaries” (ibid., 503).

Thus many theorists see a very broad range of practices, opposing a broad range of political and social forces, as dissent—those that do not aim at societal changes; those whose sole aim is to open up more possibilities in the life of the dissenter; and those that are not consciously coded as “dissent” but that take part in thoughts or activities that do not accord with social norms or societal ideology.

Based on this survey of conceptions of dissent, for this thesis I take a looser definition of dissent: not internalizing a regime’s norms; attempting to make space within a culture for one’s own form of being; and not agreeing with or assenting to societal rules or norms. This is similar to the literal meaning of *inakomyslyashchiy*⁵ and draws on the ideas of both Shtromas and the theorists who refer to “proto-dissent” and “quasi-dissent,” though without seeing this as lesser than dissidence. Researching only dissidence is insufficient, and clearer, stronger understandings of dissent in its wider sense are needed, both for academic clarity and because understanding this dissent may increase our understanding of how individual people can change their lives and societies. By clarifying this conceptualization, I want to show that dissenters deserve their own concept—that they are a concrete, if scattered, phenomenon.

⁵ *Inakomyslyashchiy*, the Russian word that is usually translated as “dissident,” simply means “differently minded person” (Barghoorn 1975, 47). The word is an active present participle (though the noun form is much more common than the verb): the word stresses the action—the process of thinking, conceiving, reasoning differently—and also conveys a sense that such actions have essentially changed the nature of the person, in that the verb has become a noun.

3.2 EVERYDAY DISSENT: MORE DISSENT-Y THAN DISSIDENCE?

Many theorists find that alternative types of dissent are just as valuable as the traditional form (political dissidence), and that studying them is more likely to lead to interesting discoveries. A primary thesis of Scott's book (1985) is that standard definitions of dissent privilege the elite and deny that peasants and other marginalized groups can dissent at all—they are definitionally cut out of dissent, and this has the effect of repressing them further (295–298). He finds that repressive systems demand entirely different criteria for what qualifies as dissent, since limiting dissent to political activity “fundamentally misconstrues the very basis of the economic and political struggle conducted daily by subordinate classes ... in repressive settings” (1985, 292). Bayat also finds that “bypassing rigid dichotomies of ... resistance ... opens up wholly new possibilities to explore unnoticed social practices,” taking the endpoint of the research to be more important than keeping within a strict, restrictive definition. If we investigate only overt political dissent, we “miss the immense political terrain that lies between quiescence and revolt and that, for better or worse, is the political environment of subject classes” (J. Scott 1990, 199). History and sociology often view the masses as “inert” (ibid., 138) when, in fact, their practices just have not been investigated.

In fact, implicit or less active dissent may be more useful than political dissidence. People outside dissident movements can help create a “dissident space” (J. Scott 1990, chapter 5) through their societal and less overtly political dissent. Another theory suggests that political dissidence reinforces the existing dynamic between oppressors and oppressed by taking part in the system as it stands: the “rebel who attacks political power ... still remains within the limits of the old master-slave couple” (Kristeva 1986, 295; see also Oushakine 2001), in contrast to the rebel who just goes about her life.

Dissenters can act against the regime's ideology, certainly, but they can also act against cultural norms and facets of ideology that dissidents ignore. Ortner believes that “resistance ... can be truly creative and transformative” because of this “multiplicity of projects in which social beings are always engaged” (1995, 191)—every action can provide an opportunity for dissent. She writes, “Resistors are doing more than simply opposing domination, more than simply producing a virtually mechanical *re*-action ... They have their *own* politics ... within all the local categories of friction and tension”

(1995, 177). Dissenters ignore the repressor-oppressed dichotomy: if dissidents are pushing back against the regime, dissenters are dodging it or jumping over it.

3.3 SOVIET DISSENT

I will now briefly describe some of the literature on Soviet dissent; most of this draws from and expands on the theories in the previous section. Most secondary literature on Soviet dissent focuses on dissidence, though there are exceptions. As seen above, there is the concept of the “half-dissident” or “loyal oppositionist” (Sandle 2002, 158, 138): some have noted that the scale of this dissent is what makes it powerful (Barghoorn 1983, Kozlov 2011, Shtromas 1990). Shtromas calls intrastructural dissent—dissent that did not aim to overthrow the regime—“the main and the most important body of Soviet dissent” (1990, 66), in part because the Soviet regime had to take such dissent into account when making decisions, since they had no real supporters (*ibid.*). Alexander Galich believed that the “silent *résistance*”—the people who “stood behind” the official dissidents—were perhaps the true bearers of the movement: “without them in the background ... nonconformist thought could not exist” (in Kozlov 2011, 25; see also Feifer 1975).

Much has also been written about less explicitly political forms of dissent in the Soviet Union. Various types of cultural dissent existed in the USSR, partly because the Party had a significant amount of control over things that would be simply “culture” in other societies and thus what might have been simply cultural pluralism in other societies could be considered political dissent in the Soviet Union (Fitzpatrick 2011); and partly because the same opportunities for cultural dissent existed in Soviet Russia as in other societies, by virtue of the fact that Soviet Russia did, of course, have a culture. Cultural dissent existed on two planes: against the “official public sphere” and against “norms of everyday behaviour, which had the character of an informal law of custom” (Voronkov and Wielgoths 2004, 111). Almost every aspect of culture had some sort of rule attached to it, produced by the regime, society, or both; thus those rules could (theoretically) be dissented against. In the private sphere, there were “unwritten cultural understandings and agreements that [Oleg Vite] compares to ‘customary law’”

(Yurchak 2005, 118). Zdravomyslova and Voronkov have, similarly, found that “habitual informal codes evidently dominated in the regulation of everyday life ... [they] worked as unquestioned traditions or cultural patterns” (2002, 58).

Many people lived *vne* (“outside, beyond”; or partially inside and partially outside, per Yurchak) the system, and many ignored it entirely in trying to forge independent lives (Yurchak 2005). Platt and Nathans (2011) see the social space of living *vne* as dissent: living *vne* required significant effort and commitment. It was inherently political, even if the individuals involved would not have categorized it that way, because “individuals do not always determine the social or political resonance of their language or behavior” (Platt and Nathans 2011, 321). Additionally, because the Soviet Union attempted to “subsum[e] that society and individual under full party control ... and repress individualism” (Yurchak 2005, 11), expressing individualism was dissent against this attempt at repression. Ultimately, “the whole spectrum of activities of the Soviet people, insofar as their refusal to assent to official Soviet aims, values, and ideas is reflected in these activities, should be taken into account in discussion of dissent in the USSR” (Shtromas 1984, 717): late Soviet society contained multiple interlocking, overlapping, circular forms of potential dissent.

4. Gender Dissent: Theory and Literature

In this chapter, I will bring together the theoretical and historical strands from the previous two chapters and unite them in the original theoretical construct of this thesis: gender dissent. I will first discuss a general theory of gender dissent and then show how similar theories have been applied in the literature. Next, I will move to the Soviet context, providing additional theoretical possibilities based on the specifics of that context and then discussing the limited literature on gendered forms of dissent in the Soviet Union. Finally, I will present my conceptualization of gender dissent.

4.1 GENDERED DISSENT: THEORETICAL POSSIBILITIES

Opportunities for dissent are difficult for women to realize, both for those who want to dissent politically (to “dissident,” or to dissent against a regime) and those who want to resist the patriarchy or social norms. Bucur writes that dissent is often conceptualized

in an implicitly sexist manner, obscuring forms of activism and attitudes that are not normatively masculine. In particular, the persisting divide between the public and private spheres in terms of familial responsibilities, combined with ‘serious’ political and other social scientists’ lack of attention to what happens in the home, has led to a blind spot about what it meant to resist or develop forms of opposition against the communist totalitarian ideologies and policies in these less visible spaces—the family, the home, parenting, birth control, and marriage. (2008, 9)

In academic literature and social conceptions, only political actions are considered dissent, and political dissent is an extremely male space (ibid., 13).

Women must also contend with their own psychological programming and with societal demands that they be submissive and acquiescent. In states such as the Soviet Union, where social norms interact with and are sometimes upheld by state power, resisting patriarchy and gendered norms is even more difficult. As Davis and Fisher write, “Structural constraints ... make it difficult for [women] to resist at all”; yet we “run the risk of blaming the victim—of attributing responsibility to women for conditions over which they often have little control” when women resist unsuccessfully or not at all (1993, 4). Women’s subordinate status, as imposed by patriarchy, makes it much more difficult for them to resist in general than it is for men, who are constructed as being more active and aggressive (Mahoney and Yngvesson 1992, 44).

Yet there are a number of avenues through which women in particular can participate in dissent, and opportunities for academics to investigate this dissent and classify it as dissent. Because patriarchy is everywhere, it embodies wide opportunities for dissent—possibilities for resisting it must also be everywhere. One such possibility is by women’s acting “masculine,” as society constructs it, and thereby gaining access to institutions that have traditionally been male. Some theorists have criticized this, saying that women have tried to gain power simply by taking on (society-defined) masculine characteristics rather than trying to empower their own set of (society-defined) characteristics: “A woman never participates as such in the consensual law of politics and society but, like a slave promoted to the rank of master, she gains admission to it only if she becomes man’s homologous equal” (Kristeva 1986, 296) by “reject[ing] ... the attributes traditionally considered feminine or maternal” (ibid., 193).

A second method is women’s attempting to raise the status of what have traditionally been seen as “feminine” characteristics, and attempting to make society value the masculine and feminine equally (Kristeva 1986, 194; Kozlova 2011, 32). As Kozlova puts it, “Demanding equality, as women, seems to me to be an erroneous expression of a real issue. Demanding to be equal presupposes a term of comparison. Equal to what? What do women want to be equal to? Men? A wage? A public position? Equal to what? Why not to themselves?” (2011, 32). Julia Kristeva proposes that women are automatically dissidents because they are women: “sexual difference,

women: isn't that another form of dissidence?" (1986, 296). She does not back this up, but it is worth considering that women, the second sex, people for whom society was not constructed but who merely exist in it as a sidenote, may dissent just by existing, by having needs that society has not anticipated and cannot handle. Women are often placed in a position of "social invisibility" and "cultural nonrecognition" (Giard 1998, 156)—so one method of dissent is by attempting to transcend this invisibility and become recognized culturally. They can even claim the kitchen (metaphorically or literally) as their means of transcendence (ibid., 168)—denoting the kitchen as itself worthy of social recognition. The importance of everyday life is often overlooked in scholarship and as a site of dissent; and because women are often in charge of the everyday, they can be seen as the owners of everyday sites of dissent. Some of women's "micropractices"—their daily/everyday actions—may constitute dissent (Davis and Fisher 1993, 10).

Additionally, women can dissent through transcending their identities as women. Kristeva writes that feminism started out with "the idea of difference ... its belief in Woman, Her power, Her writing" (1986, 208), but it may now be able to "break free ... into each and every element of the female whole, and, finally, to bring out the singularity of each woman" (ibid.). Monique Wittig writes that women's individuality has been repressed: "'Woman' is not each one of us, but the political and ideological formation which negates 'women' (the product of a relation of exploitation). 'Woman' is there to confuse us, to hide the reality 'women.' ... One needs to know and experience the fact that one can constitute oneself as a subject (as opposed to an object of oppression), that one can *become* someone in spite of oppression, that one has one's own identity" (2002, 16).

Finally, Butler writes about the subversion of traditional gendered roles. While most of her discussion is about drag, she lists "ideals and rules of proper and improper masculinity and femininity" as part of society's "preemptive and violent circumscription of reality" (1999, xxiv)—that society inflicts binary/normative gender roles upon people. She refuses to define "subversion," but concedes that nonnormative gender performances—whether it's drag or theoretically some other infringement—could be considered subversive (ibid.) Women's dissent may thus involve performances of identity that deny the societal view of what a woman should be and asserting their

own unique identities in the face of a social order that tells them exactly what their identities ought to be.⁶

4.2 GENDER “RESISTANCE”

There is a body of work about so-termed women’s resistance—or dissent, according to my definition (see section 3.1)—in societies worldwide. Several papers comment on the interaction between resistance against patriarchy and resistance against a more distinct form of power. Richter-Devroe (2011), writing about Palestinian women’s use of enjoyment of everyday life to resist both the occupation and the patriarchy, says that their “framing their acts of crossing Israeli-imposed physical restriction as acts of resistance against the occupation, are in fact also seizing an opportunity to covertly challenge and trespass internal patriarchal forms of control” (32). Amireh (2012) notes that Palestinian women in resistance movements during the first intifada challenged the Israeli occupation but not their own patriarchal society, and thus were unable to transform society in a major way (438; see also Peteet 1991). Riessman (2011), Bayat (2010), and Ong (1987) all write about resistance against culture, social rules, social expectations, and/or the gender hierarchy rather than against a regime; MacLeod expresses the form of resistance her women take as against “a layered and overlapping round of oppressors ... a web of cross-cutting power relations” (1992, 553).

Many of these studies use Scott, de Certeau, Foucault, and Bourdieu as the cornerstones of their theoretical background, suggesting that a focus on women’s dissent requires a postmodern power-relation framework. Richter-Devroe discusses resistance as “a tactic to temporarily subvert established power configurations” (2011, 40); Riessman, discussing South Indian childless women’s resistance of stigma, describes “transformative thoughts and actions in everyday life” (2000, 122); MacLeod describes Egyptian women’s use of the veil as protest rather than subordination as “submerged resistance” (1992, 543); Bayat writes about how Iranian women “defy, resist, negotiate ... by involving ordinary daily practices of life” (2010, 98); and Ong

⁶ Men also dissent against the patriarchy in this way, but space constraints prevent my discussing it.

writes about Malaysian women's "express[ing] new identities" during the transition to capitalism (1987, xv). Riessman, Ong, and MacLeod see resistance as allowing women to have internal control over their lives; it allows them to establish individual identities, and it makes them "assertive actors" (MacLeod 1992, 533). These tactics are effective on the individual level.

While some studies (Riessman 2000, Ong 1987, MacLeod 1992) focus on how resistance shapes women's lives, others study resistance as a diagnostic of power (Richter-Devroe 2011, Abu-Lughod 1990). Abu-Lughod finds that "the most interesting thing to emerge from this work on resistance is a greater sense of the complexity of the nature and forms of domination" (1990, 42). Her argument is echoed even in articles that do privilege women's experiences and agency; Richter-Devroe acknowledges that women's resistance often does not have visible effects and that therefore it is academically useful to study it from the perspective of what it can tell us about power (2011, 36). There is a divide in the goals of studying resistance: I fall on the side of Ong and MacLeod, who see it as a valuable tool for understanding women's identity formation, rather than with those who see it as relating mainly to scholarship on power.

My study draws on many of the same theories as these articles and is influenced by their ideas about the types, effects, and value of women's resistance, while extending them to the Soviet Russian context; but it differs from them in that it aims to study dissent for its own sake. It tries to make a larger contribution to theory than these studies do, and examines a wider range of behaviors than they are able to.

4.3 SOVIET SPECIFICS: THEORY AND LITERATURE

Drawing on this chapter and section 2.2, I discuss here possibilities for gender dissent for Soviet women specifically, including the limited past research on this phenomena.

Women in the Soviet era often did not have the chance to dissent in larger, outside-the-home ways. Wielgohs and Pollack write that "the specific qualities of socialist working conditions offered critical intellectuals the opportunity to mobilize a significant amount of free time for dissident activities and thus to compensate at least in

part for their shortage of financial means” (Wielgoths and Pollack 2004, 257), yet the exact opposite of this was true for women: Wielgoths and Pollack implicitly bar women from dissent by connecting it so strongly to men, who were on average the only ones with any significant amount of free time.

According to the editorial staff of *Woman and Russia*, “A woman is not in the position to turn aside any inhuman force against her; if she liberates her hands, her home crashes down” (Women and Eastern Europe Group 1980, 21). Women, in charge of everyday survival, could not dissent as easily because if they ignored the household, everyday life would not go on. Sariban writes: “What if Soviet women were to refuse to do the housework, were to ‘commit sabotage,’ as people are accustomed to doing on their government job. What would happen? Look around you: people would be keeling over before a month was up” (Sariban 1984, 208). The extent of her belief in women’s importance to the regime suggests their dissentive potential, even if it was not realized in the way she envisions.

Elena Alexandrovna provides an explanation for why women did not dissent in the way Sariban suggested: that social control imposed an extremely strong, extremely limited view of morality, so that behaving in a feminine manner was not only expected by society but actually a moral mandate (1984, 34). She finds that Soviet women’s acquiescence to the gender order “is created by thousands of little things that are at times imperceptible but nevertheless create a psychological atmosphere” (ibid., 32)—echoing Foucault’s system of power relations. This social control suggests why it was so difficult for women to dissent. Kharkhordin notes that social pressure was much stronger and more difficult to defy for women than for men, giving the example of the very few female stil’yagi in 1950s Russia; the principle continued into the Brezhnev era, though the stil’yagi did not (Kharkhordin 1999, 290).

Yet women’s dissent, where it did come, was significant, even when—or because—it did not conform to an official dissident movement or traditional definitions of dissent. Kiaer and Naiman say that the private sphere upholds the public sphere by maintaining gender and social divisions, so the private sphere has the potential to disrupt power hierarchies (ibid., 9, 6). The state also had a concrete interest in everyday life: it was a site of “ideological colonization” that the state meant to mold in service of its goals (Kiaer and Naiman 2006, 5).

Dissent against the patriarchy was rarer than dissent against the regime. Watson writes that “because obedience was required to a ‘fatherly’ state, patriarchy could never be the subject of critical reflection or challenge: criticism of patriarchal gender relations would have constituted direct criticism of the political system itself” (1993, 476). She finds that “the state was far easier to criticise, and ultimately to challenge and overthrow, than was patriarchy itself” (ibid.). This may explain why women conceived of their dissent as against the state even when it was more exactly against the patriarchy, and also why they used patriarchal values to dissent against the state: it was a more familiar, comfortable way of opposing the state. Viola’s article on *bab’i bunt* (1986), about one type of women’s dissent—the *bunt* (similar to a riot)—during collectivization, demonstrates the state’s different reaction to women’s vs. men’s protests: the women were taken less seriously, as women were seen as not responsible for their actions (34). Women were thus able to use their femininity as an excuse for their often quite successful revolts (38), a method that continued throughout the Soviet Union. Yet Viola also notes that the women involved in these protests simultaneously dissented against the patriarchy by dissenting against the regime: their actions—rioting—were so “unfeminine” as to be a violation of patriarchal values.

I call this type of dissenter the “bulldog mother”: either dissenting against the state without trying to dissent against the patriarchy, or using dissent against the regime as an excuse to also dissent against the patriarchy. Such a woman could defy the requirements of being friendly, agreeable, passive, and shy; production, if she does not work or severely limits her work; and participating in society, if she does not care about or spend time on building communism or engaging in other community-oriented pursuits.

Alternately, dissent could be antisocietal without being antiregime, or opposed to society’s norms while adhering strictly to the regime’s, though it is hard to draw a strict dividing line between the regime’s conception of femininity and society’s. Societal dissent could be seen more in the smaller, personal dissent that took place among families and in the workplace. This is the “rabid worker-bee”: a woman who takes the state’s ideology about equality at face value and refuses to indulge society’s “backward” patriarchal values. She would potentially defy the requirements of

reproduction and childrearing; being a wife and housekeeper; being passive, shy, gentle, friendly; and sacrificing the self.

An additional form of dissent is women's search for individual identity. My thesis draws on and was inspired by Healey's (2001; 2002) ideas about what dissent may comprise, particularly the very notion that asserting parts of our identities can operate as dissent (Healey 2002, 141–42), and I expand his ideas to women, including presumably heterosexual women. Healey discusses the queer-theory idea of "identity as resistance" (ibid., 141; see also Weeks 1991, 74–79), including the ways in which queer people may negotiate the terms of their identities within the prevailing definitions and discourse (Healey 2002, 141.). Women's search for individual identity suggests antiregime activity, since the regime stressed the collective over the individual and put women squarely into a particular box of characteristics and activities; it may also be antipatriarchal because it allowed women to craft identities that ignored societal notions of gender. It may also be a form of dissent particularly suited for women because women were already alienated from Soviet society by the fact that their primary sphere was the home; perhaps it was easier or more natural for them to continue walking away from Soviet ideology into their own world. This woman is the "white raven," which in Russian culture means a person who does not conform to expectations (see Akhmadulina 1977 and Rummyantseva 2003). She could defy almost any of the gender requirements, though she is more likely to defy those relating to family and husbands and self-sacrifice; she might also defy "communist morality."

4.4 CONCEPTUALIZATION OF GENDER DISSENT

Based on this discussion of gender and dissent, I define "gender dissent" as any form of dissent that has the effect or intention of defying traditional gendered societal roles: thinking, acting, presenting oneself, and/or conceiving of oneself in ways that do not accord with society's gender norms or explicit ideology of gender. Gender dissent fights against the social gender order and/or the state's explicit gender ideology, if one exists, and it can thus be social/cultural dissent, antiregime (political) dissent, or both. It involves not complying with gender norms, not internalizing gender norms—in the

same way that “regular” dissent can involve not internalizing the regime’s values—and/or believing in conceptions of gender different from those espoused by society at large. It can be summarized as using gender as a form of dissent. Gender dissent is open to all genders, and is probably definitionally more common among transgender and nonbinary people, since those identities are not widely accepted or understood. This thesis focuses on women because of space constraints, because few sources could be found for transgender or nonbinary people, and because I initially believed that gender dissent was probably less common and/or less traceable among men than women in Soviet Russia.⁷

I argue that women did engage in gender dissent in late Soviet Russia, to various extents and at various times. Some forms of dissent—e.g., against the characteristics that society expected them to have—were more common, and others—e.g., not marrying or having children—were much rarer. Regime and more purely societal dissent interacted, with societal dissent either magnifying regime dissent or occurring through the lack of regime dissent, and vice versa.

⁷ See Zdravomyslova and Temkina (2013) for a discussion of male roles in late Soviet society.

Five: Methodology, Methods, and Data

5.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research puzzle of this thesis involves the fact that so much research of dissent has focused on forms of dissent that are open only to men, or that only men took part in. How women may have been involved in dissent in the Soviet Union has not been studied both because so much research has focused on the dissident movement and because research focused exclusively on women is still comparatively rare. I see this research as worthwhile because the fact that generally only male dissent has been studied means that it is possible that more than 50 percent of Soviet dissent has been ignored up until now; surely that in itself is worth exploring. Additionally, due to the commonalities of ideology and social norms between the Soviet Union and Russia, particularly regarding gender, studying women's dissent in the Soviet Union is relevant today.

The second facet of the research puzzle is gender. Since gender was a significant part of Communist ideology, one that directly influenced, even directed the lives of, a large proportion of the population, there must have been opportunities to dissent against this ideology, just as there were opportunities to dissent against the Party's control of art and media and other facets of ideology.⁸ The fact that women are comparatively understudied in academia as a whole also drew me to this field: perhaps the reason that

⁸ See, for example, the movie *Stil'yagi* (2008), which does not code its heroes' actions as dissent but, in their rejection of the Komsomol and of other norms, should be seen as such; and studies of phenomena such as the widespread listening to Vladimir Vysotsky and other popular antiregime singers, listening to Western radio, buying foreign clothes, etc.

gender dissent has not been studied yet lies less in its insignificance and more in the fact that the subjects of the study—women—have often been deemed insignificant.

This thesis is a combination of a new concept study and a disciplined interpretive case study. The new concept portion of the study identifies gender dissent as a new subtype of the concept of dissent and a subtype of everyday dissent. The concept is broad enough that it should apply to other cases worldwide; many societies may, because of the importance of strict notions of gender, contain the opportunity for gender dissent. Yet because the concept of gender dissent is not entirely new, the study is also partially a disciplined interpretive case study, in which I explore how applying the concept of gender dissent to the thoughts, speech, and actions of my subjects can add nuance and explanatory power.

5.2 METHODOLOGY

The major theoretical methodological underpinnings of this thesis are postmodernism, constructivism, and discourse analysis. Postmodernism can be loosely defined as a broad system of thought that challenges empirical understandings of the world (Alvesson 2002), suggesting that knowledge is interpretive and encompassing the idea that there is no single, objective reality. Many modern and contemporary areas of social research, such as theories of gender and discourse, fall under the umbrella of postmodernism. I do not necessarily claim that the Soviet Union was a postmodern society in a literal sense, though Lyotard, one of the “inventors” of postmodernism, discredits the very idea of progress and the assumption that the postmodern follows the modern (Lyotard 2007). While the Soviet Union’s objective reality may not have been postmodern in the sense of technology and progress, individual identities within that reality can still exhibit the fragmentation and certainly the denial of objective truth that characterizes postmodernism. My thesis is thus postmodern in philosophy, in that it seeks to overthrow the accepted reality of women in the Soviet era, explores gendered selves as part of people’s shifting identities, and relies on discourse analysis.

Constructivism states that “social rules (the term *rules* includes, but is not restricted to, legal rules) make the process by which people and society constitute each

other continuous and reciprocal” (Onuf 1998, 59). Repeated speech acts become conventions, and conventions then become normative rules (ibid., 67). This ties in closely with discourse analysis, which takes as its central tenet the idea that “talk is action,” that discourse actually creates society rather than simply expressing it (Gill 2000, 174)—language is “constitutive” as opposed to (merely) “referential” (S. Taylor 2001b, 6). Discourses are tied to ideology: people understand the world in the ways they do partially through the ways they are trained to use language (Edley 2001, 202), and ideology in turn creates “subjects,” according to Althusser (in ibid., 209). Belief in discourse’s constant construction of identity and of society leads to the possibility that “transforming the *status quo* becomes understood as a matter of challenging and changing discourses, encouraging people to tell different stories about themselves or others” (ibid., 193). The methodology I use here directly informs my results, as looking at the world in this constructivist way (Onuf 1998) leads to the possibility that limited and minor but constant and identity-based forms of dissent can in fact remake the world, since its corresponding but opposing discourse was what constructed the world that these women are dissenting against.

Discourse analysis “seeks to analyze the meanings embedded in texts that reflect other discourses and indeed the broader discursive environment in which language constructs both meaning and power relations” (Ackerley and True 2010, 208). There is a wide variety of types of discourse analysis, from those that focus on the level of the word and below—linguistically influenced methods—to those that take a more holistic approach and look at “language-in-use” (Miller 2000, 315). This latter method allows us to examine the content as well as the words, while keeping us closely focused on the culture at hand, since looking at discourse does not allow us to generalize widely (S. Taylor 2001a, 315–16). Alvesson and Karreman describe a spectrum of types of discourse analysis, ranging from micro to mega in terms of how closely language itself is analyzed versus how much language is placed in context; they also distinguish between the determinative versus autonomous approaches (2007, 324), i.e., the debate over whether “discourses offer important clues to other kinds of practices than pure language use” (ibid., 326).

I follow Alvesson and Karreman’s meso/determinative approach. The meso zoom means “being relatively sensitive to language use in context but interested in

finding broader patterns and going beyond the details of the text and generalizing to similar local contexts” (ibid., 322), while the determinative approach means that I believe discourse does offer the types of clues mentioned above: that “statements say something about individual or socially shared ‘subjective reality’” (ibid., 334), that it expresses “durable meaning ... ‘beyond’ specific linguistic interaction” (ibid., 319). This is because the women I am studying are situated in a firm social and ideological context; the point of my reading their writings is not to describe their own constructed views of reality but to examine how they interact with the already existing, already constructed reality. At the same time, I am closely examining their words because it is only in so doing that I can find dissentive meanings—since they do not say so explicitly, it is necessarily to look closely at what they are saying and how what they say and think interacts with and negotiates the social order.

Gill describes the type of reading that is necessary to analyze writings for social science: she prescribes a “careful, close reading that moves between text and context to examine the content, organization and functions of discourse” (2000, 188). Nancy Miller calls on “the practice of ‘over-reading’, which is needed when analysing non-canonical works and women’s writing” (in Järviluoma, Moisala, and Vilkkio 2003, 52). She sees women’s writing as needing a separate interpretive lens, probably because the bulk of interpretation in academia has been done on men’s writing. This ties in with the feminist methodological imperative to “reflect on ... marginalization and silencing” (Ackerly and True 2010, 209).

5.3 DATA SOURCES

The data for this project was drawn from memoirs, newspaper and magazine articles, oral histories, published interviews, and fiction (see Appendix 2 for a list and description). The criteria for selection was that they were written by or present interviews of Soviet Russian women, and that they were written during or are about the Brezhnev era, or ideally both. I initially searched for sources through library and Internet searches, and used materials that I had come across in previous studies. I broadened the search by consulting scholars for suggestions and through the use of

bibliographies (Akimova 2006, Paperno 2009, Zhitomirskaya 1976) to find memoirs about the time period I was investigating, written by women. The sources about nonheterosexual women were identified in consultation with a postdoctoral researcher who has researched similar topics (Stella 2015); Maya Plisetskaya's memoir was discovered when I learned that ballerinas often did not have children, and I then sought out a memoir by a ballerina. While some of these methods involved a focused search for materials that I knew would be more likely to involve gender dissent, these materials did not make up the majority of the data. I made many attempts to find diaries and letters by women who would not have had the desire or opportunity to publish books, but I was unsuccessful.

Published sources were chosen for study for various methodological and practical considerations. Memoir analysis is rare in the social sciences—interviews are far more often studied. Analyzing memoirs was thus a way for me to make a contribution to the social science field, asserting that this is a worthwhile task (see J. Taylor 2009). Once memoirs are accepted as a legitimate source of knowledge (see Dyvik 2016, Kuromiya 1985, Marche 2015, Nathans 2015, Sandle 2002, J. Taylor 2009, and Walker 2000), it is apparent that there is an enormous existing trove of materials ready for analysis. This is particularly true in the Soviet context because of the tradition of Russian memoir-writing (see Kuromiya 1985, Nathans 2015, and Walker 2000). Furthermore, previous study on Russian dissidence has made use of memoirs; thus treating the memoirs used here in similar ways to how memoirs of the Soviet intelligentsia and dissidents have been treated both asserts that these memoirs are valuable and valid as a data source, and asserts their equal significance with dissident memoirs.⁹

Additionally, memoirs lead to entirely different data than other sources, such as interviews. Writing a memoir necessitates extensive thinking and reworking (Marche 2015, 274): they are produced intentionally, and thus “accurately,” in a sense. Memoirs also allowed me to gain answers to questions I would not have thought to ask (see J. Taylor 2009): for example, most of the women in *Moscow Women* gave fairly similar answers to the questions, since the questions were all the same and all the product of

⁹ See Fitzpatrick 2006, Hellbeck 2001, Kozlova 2006, and Liljeström 2004 for more on Soviet diary analysis.

Western-oriented researchers. Not writing my own questions allowed me a much wider range of answers and limited the influence of my bias.

While memoirs made up the bulk of the data, I also used several fictional sources extensively (Baranskaya 1989, Vorontsova-Yur'yeva 2005, Voznesenskaya 1991). This is unusual but not unheard-of in the social sciences: Rockwell theorizes that fiction is a product of the society in which it was written, and that it provides descriptions of both social reality and the values, attitudes, and norms present in that society (Rockwell 1974, 4, 117; for further discussion of the value of fiction in sociological research, see Carlin 2010 and Rusu 2014). The fictional sources I used were all in the realist mode, which makes my analysis less speculative, and some were written with the explicit goal of providing an accurate image of society. Some were partially autobiographical (Vorontsova-Yur'yeva), while others drew on knowledge and facts about the period and reflected conditions and mind frames of the period in which they were written (Baranskaya and Voznesenskaya). Because of these considerations, I treated the fictional sources fairly similarly to the memoirs.

5.4 LIMITATIONS

My sample is not representative, which is common to this type of qualitative research. I am using a “specimen perspective,” investigating a small category of people rather than the population as a whole (Ten Have in S. Taylor 2001b, 24), which is sufficient as “a medium for continued theoretical and methodological discussions” (Hansen quoted in Ackerley and True 2010, 209). Because it is not representative, I make no broad statements about the extent of Soviet/Russian gender dissent, instead discussing how a particular subset of Soviet Russian women dissented from gender norms. Most of the women in this study were privileged and educated, from Moscow or other cities, and had the means and opportunity to write; all this may mean that they also had more opportunity or incitement to gender dissent. I make no claims that gender dissent would be as common in the rest of the population.

Some of the materials were written after the fall of the Soviet Union, and most were written after the events described therein took place; thus there are likely problems

with misremembering (Marche 2015, Sandle 2002). This was less problematic with sources that were written during the time period, because those writings could still be analyzed for their writers' current opinions and attitudes: even if the author misrepresents an event, the misrepresentation still tells us how she thinks about gender, so we can analyze her writing from the point of view of pure discourse. Memoirs written after the time period had to be treated more carefully, since the different political climate might have influenced how these women remembered their experiences, and their current attitudes about gender could not be taken as information about their attitudes during the late Soviet era. These sources were mined for the information they contained about the period, rather than the discourse.

Some of these materials were published abroad or after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but most of them were published by Soviet state publishing houses, so there was likely censorship—self-imposed, official, or both (Kuromiya 1985). The fact that they were published should not be taken to mean that the regime endorsed them, or that they were not dissent; I read these sources like people of the era would read so-called Aesopian language (language that sounds acceptable, so that it is able to circulate, but that hides a subversive deeper meaning), finding out what was hidden behind statements that the regime would not have found problematic.

Some of the materials were published in English, and the original Russian was either nonexistent or unavailable. These materials were treated similarly to how sources written after the period were: with a less intense focus on the discourse, since it could not be assumed that the translation at the level of the word was accurate (see Müller 2007 and Stella 2010).

5.5 DATA PRODUCTION AND CODING

The start of the data production process was my reading the materials I had collected and noting quotations that involved gender in any broad way. This included references to sexual/romantic relationships and desires, marriage, children, family, and housework; explicit references to gender and gender roles; and references to identity

formation. I also included explicit mentions of dissent, even when they did not relate to gender.

I tagged the quotations using keywords that expressed their basic content, to make them easier to sort later; this method of coding—using it as a “preliminary task that facilitates analysis”—is common to discourse analysis (Potter 2004, 615). These keywords relate to the gender requirements placed on women, as detailed above. One to four tags were used for each quotation. The tags and their meanings, where not self-explanatory, are as follows:

Family	
Gender ID	Discussions of gender roles, e.g. women calling themselves “tomboys” but basically conforming to women’s roles
Gender ID (explicit)	Conscious discussions of nonbinary gender expressions
Household	
Identity	
Marriage	
Men’s roles	Women’s describing what they thought men’s roles should be
Nonequality	Statements that expressed women’s recognition that Soviet society and/or government did not treat them as equal to men
Nonheterosexual	
Normative	Expressions that conformed to the societal/regime gender orders
Norm subverted	Expressions that were rhetorically normative but subtly subverted these norms; usually reflected a rhetorical or mental accession to norms but a practice that opposed them, such as nonheterosexual women’s desiring traditional families
Soviet dissent	
Traditional femininity	
Unfeminine	Women’s expressing characteristics or actions that did not accord with Soviet/societal expectations of women’s gender, such as showing strength or aggression
Work	

Data production was finished after I had reached saturation (see J. Taylor 2009): I was no longer uncovering new categories of dissent, and statements about the various themes of gender were becoming repetitive. I collected 305 quotations from 34 sources, 23 in Russian.

I simultaneously kept a separate list of quotations that expressed the societal and regime’s gender structures, showing these norms both in women’s own words and in official estimation:

Official–Brezhnev	Brezhnev regime’s official gender ideology, expressed by politicians
Official–media	Newspaper sources (coded “official” because the government controlled the media)
Official–propaganda	Information about propaganda (<i>secondary only</i>)
Unofficial–ideal	Expressions of what the ideal woman should be
Unofficial–science	Biological and social-scientific materials, or the points of view of scientists and social scientists (influenced by the state but also expressing personal viewpoints)

I then tagged the quotations with descriptive keywords that express the gender requirements placed on women, as explicated above:

Biology	Biological determinism—the qualities women were supposed to possess as a function of biology
Capabilities	Capabilities that women were expected to have or generally seen as having
Characteristics	Characteristics that women were expected to have or generally seen as having
Paternalistic	Statements that emphasized men’s protecting women
Production	
Production and reproduction	
Reproduction	

In total, 42 data points were collected from 12 primary sources, 7 in Russian.

Based on these findings and that of the secondary literature, I created a table of gender requirements and the corresponding “ideal manifestations of dissent” to operationalize Soviet gender dissent. This table was a precursor to the analysis of the data, and provided a framework against which to analyze the quotations I found. The table shows the ways in which it was possible for Soviet Russian women to dissent against the gender order: it shows how they were expected to behave, in terms of their gender, and the possible actions and/or thoughts they could take to resist or defy these expectations. The “ideal manifestations” are influenced by my theoretical and historical overview of Soviet gender dissent, above; they are also more basic in that I sometimes simply inverted the gender requirement, putting its opposite as the method of dissent.

Gender Requirement	Source	How to Dissent	How to Dissent
Production	State	Not work	
Reproduction	State	Not have children	
Equality with men	State	Believe that women are better or worse than men	Express belief that women are better or worse than men
Wife	State; patriarchy	Not get married	Be nonheterosexual
Housekeeper	State; patriarchy	Not do housework	Have men/husbands contribute to housework
Raise children	State; patriarchy	Send children off without regrets	Make husband raise children
Morally correct; uphold communist morality	State	Be a criminal	Be nonheterosexual
Participate in society	State	Stay home	Not care about society
Better at emotions, people	“Science”	Be uncomfortable with people	Be uninterested in other people
Self-sacrificing	“Science”	Focus on self	
Passive, shy, modest, “feminine”	“Science”	Be aggressive	Have “masculine” character traits
Take care of appearance	Society	Not care about appearance	Have a transgressive appearance

The items in the “how to dissent” columns are indicators (though limited) for the concept of gender dissent within the Soviet context. The actual indicators I found in the text are more nuanced, but they follow some of the patterns shown here.

5.6 PRESENTATION OF DATA

After data production was complete, I began a secondary stage of coding, using categories in line with my conceptualization and operationalization of gender dissent—the dissent requirements explicated in chapter 2, and the possibilities for dissent explained both at the end of the theoretical chapter and in the “ideal dissent” categories above. I recategorized each quotation according to a “concrete” category relating to everyday life (chiefly to easily distinguish the quotations’ content rather than for purposes of analysis), an “abstract” category relating to dissent, and whether the dissent was societal or regime-oriented or both. I also show here the gender “requirements” that are potentially dissented against in each category.

Concrete Category	Description	Requirement Dissented Against
Family		Wife; housekeeper; raise children; reproduction; emotions/people; self-sacrificing
Gender roles	Explicit discussions of gender roles	Equality with men; morally correct
Household		Housekeeper
Identity	Anything closely pertaining to a woman’s sense of self or her building of that sense of self, in terms that were unrelated to family, household, or work	Morally correct; participate in society; self-sacrificing; passive
Relationships	Referred usually to marriage or sexual relationships, but occasionally to significant friendships	Marriage; morally correct
Work		Production

Abstract Category	Description	Requirement Dissented Against
Gender ID	Explicit discussions of gender identity—i.e. when speakers said that they did not feel like or were not their assigned gender	Equality with men; passive, shy; emotions/people; appearance
Identity	Similar to above	Morally correct; participate in society; self-sacrificing; passive
Nonequality	Discussion of the fact that the Soviet system was not equal; these quotations generally referenced a way in which women were treated differently than men	Equality with men; morally correct; self-sacrificing; passive, shy
Non-heterosexual	Statements by nonheterosexual people—not all of these statements referenced nonheterosexuality	Reproduction; wife; housekeeper; raise children; morally correct; self-sacrificing; appearance
Soviet dissent¹⁰	Explicit manifestations of Soviet dissent—not paired with a “concrete” categorization	Morally correct; participate in society; passive, shy
Traditional femininity	Women’s acting in ways that accorded with patriarchal/societal notions of femininity, in ways that also in some way violated regime mandates	Production; equality with men

¹⁰ This category was not always related to gender, but often women would make gender dissentive statements and then politically dissentive statements, so it was useful to include both to investigate how they interacted.

Unfeminine	Statements in which the woman thought or acted in ways that did not accord with patriarchal/societal notions of femininity, including treating men and women as equal (rather than equitable), having or representing oneself as having “masculine” characteristics, or not having “feminine” characteristics, such as tenderness and friendliness—statements were coded as such when the “unfemininity” was the most interesting or significant facet of the dissent	Reproduction; wife; housekeeper; raise children; morally correct; emotions/people; self-sacrificing; passive, shy; appearance
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The final data breakdown was as follows:

	Family	G. Roles	Household	ID	Rel' ship	Work	None	Totals
Gender ID	0	9	0	0	0	0		9
Identity	6	12	1	23	3	24		69
Nonequality	6	8	11	3	6	10		44
Nonhetero	5	6	1	4	27	0		43
Soviet Dissent	7	0	6	9	5	2	9	38
Femininity	2	10	4	1	10	6		33
Unfeminine	14	19	1	7	17	7		65
Totals	40	64	24	47	68	49	9	301

There were 84 “antiregime” dissent statements, 74 “societal,” and 143 “both.” That the majority of dissent was “both” shows the overlap in the regime’s and society’s gender structures. Since the sample is not representative, these numbers are not intended to show how common particular forms of dissent were—they are just an overview of the data.

5.7 REFLECTION

Reflexivity is a necessary condition of feminist and qualitative research: since the researcher is so heavily involved in data production and interpretation, her own preconceptions necessarily color the results (Ackerly and True 2010, 118–19; Alvesson and Sköldberg 2000). I have certainly been discursively socialized into a particular ideology that has influenced the data I produced and the way in which I analyzed it (Alvesson and Sköldberg 245–47).

This is explicitly a feminist project. Oakley notes that quantitative analysis is coded as masculine, qualitative as feminine (in Järviluoma, Moisala, and Vilkkö 2003, 23); and Miller writes that “ordinary language as understood by discourse analysis is routinely, irremediably political” (2000, 316). Thus by analyzing the statements women chose to make, I attempt to politicize women who previously were not seen as political. Ackerly and True write that “all social researchers ... can exercise power by turning people’s lives into authoritative texts” (2010, 113): by taking previously overlooked memoirs as my data source for this project, I declare them worthy of formal study.

One major consideration of feminist methodology is how to not appropriate the text, even when the researcher has fundamental disagreements with them. In relying on memoirs rather than interviews, I privilege what the women chose to write, rather than giving myself the authority to decide what in their lives is important. Yet my own ideology still colored the project: I am a devoted third-wave Western feminist, and it is not possible to mentally throw away the years of conditioning, education, and reading that has shaped my thinking—it is constitutive of my identity. Though I made efforts to broaden my knowledge of feminism and use a variety of feminist and quasi-feminist sources to limit my bias, ultimately Western feminism is the lens of interpretation for this project because it is my reigning ideology. In being conscious of this fact, I hope to limit, and at the very least acknowledge, its impact on this project.

Six: Analysis and Interpretation

In this chapter I will analyze and interpret the data, according to the abstract dissent categories. I will start by giving a brief overview of the major trends in each category and then do a detailed interpretation of several quotes in each category. I chose quotes for interpretation in which the dissent either worked on multiple levels or was far below the surface.

6.1 GENDER IDENTITY

Some items of data in this category violated biological essentialism—the late Soviet norm that men and women are inherently different and that their upbringing, socialization, and roles in society should reflect and reinforce those differences—and the common belief that equality led to men being feminized and women being masculinized, and that a return to traditional gender roles was desirable. The women not only broke the requirement that they behave in “feminine” ways but also dissented by expressing their disbelief in biological essentialism—instead perhaps following a rudimentary form of Butler’s, Wittig’s, and Millett’s gender theories, or perhaps maintaining a belief in earlier Soviet ideologies that had classified men and women as totally equal. Some dissent was discursive: women expressed views that defied prevailing norms, such as saying that “there’s not really much difference between a boy and girl” (Liza, Hansson and Lidén 1983, 17). There was also some active defiance of the boundary between men’s and women’s characteristics and roles, i.e., taking on men’s roles with the full consciousness and acceptance of the fact that they were doing

something “masculine.” Finally, there is explicit gender dissent (see Berzina 2000), the subject’s actually presenting themselves as a different gender than the one to which they were assigned.

Lida, interviewed in *Moscow Women*, expressed a desire to transgress gender: “All I knew was that I wanted to go to sea. And I only wanted that because I really always wanted to be a boy” (Lida, Hansson and Lidén 1983, 101). Lida connects gender identity with gender roles, endorsing biological essentialism; she wants to perform a boy’s role because she feels that she is a boy, or she feels that if she performs a boy’s role she will become a boy. It’s possible that her connection of “going to sea” with “being a boy” implies less a fundamental belief that her gender was different but more a response to life’s possibilities for women:¹¹ the only way she could go to sea (metaphorically or literally) was by being a boy. The very fact that she wanted to go to sea suggests a desire to escape from the overwhelming gender order surrounding her on land. She later says that she is a tomboy, and she wanted a boy child rather than a girl because she wanted him “to have the same experiences and interests as [she] did” (Hansson and Lidén 1983, 98): she wanted to socialize her child into typical Soviet gender norms even though she herself had rejected them. It does not occur to her that a daughter could have the same “masculine” interests she had, or perhaps she understood that it was possible but dangerous and undesirable. So while Lida is dissenting by not conforming to gender roles in her self-conception of her identity, she also accepts that such dissent is problematic, and she accepts the wider structure of the Soviet gender order: she wants to be a boy, instead of accepting an identity as a girl who does not behave like a typical Soviet girl (see also Kay 2002).

In contrast is Natasha, who seems more comfortable in her dissent. She says, “I know that there are certain feminine characteristics one is supposed to learn in childhood; to be a coquette, to dress well, to devote a lot of time to one’s appearance” (Hansson and Lidén 1983, 164), and that men are “more open and straightforward, and ... more interesting” (ibid.): she believes that men and women are quite different. But in her personal life, she ignores that belief: “I didn’t care for the prim and proper girls ... I never learned any of that. I’m happy with what I have, and I don’t need anything else”

¹¹ It is impossible to know whether Lida was transgender in the contemporary sense; I have analyzed this passage assuming that she was not.

(ibid.). She echoes the Soviet discourse of gender differences and the Soviet implicit preference for the masculine, but her stated actions—how she sees herself and her identity—reveal that she is perfectly comfortable and happy having an identity that does not fit these norms. She knows that she is transgressing, and she is “happy” doing so: her consciousness of and comfort in her identity imply an additional level of dissent.¹²

6.2 IDENTITY

The Identity dissent category includes a wide range of feelings, actions, and thoughts that present the woman as not adhering to the proper identity of a good Soviet woman, usually by putting her individual personal identity first—dissenting against the Soviet ideal of the collective, and thus Soviet morality; the mandate that women put others first (are self-sacrificing); and the societal/biological assumption that women are passive and shy, in fighting for their goals and asserting their rights to their independent identities. This category included women who maintained their own identity and claimed it as important while having children (Arbatova 1997 and 1998; Baranskaya 1989; Buckley 1986b; Masha in Hansson and Lidén 1983); women who put work first, some calling it the most important thing in their lives (Goldovskaya 2002; Latynina 1970; Petushkova 1979; Taratuta 1986; Tkachenko 1983); women who explored their identity as women and their conception of the idea of “Woman” (Braidotti 1994; Kristeva 1986; Wittig 2002); and women who went on soul-searching missions, trying to find satisfying identities beyond the Soviet requirements.

Some women worked through the ideas of gender swirling around them in society and explored how their own identity fitted in. Tat’yana Zemskova wondered of herself and the other women working at her TV studio whether their gendered qualities—“We are nagging, nervous, we have tragic eyes” (1985, 269)—made them unsuited for their profession. But on the next page she throws away such worries, saying she needed to get back to work. She references the “particular qualities” women supposedly have, and then moves on in direct contradiction of them.

¹² This is not to say that what Natasha does/thinks is therefore “better” or more impressive than what Lida does/thinks.

Other women talked about finding a more spiritual or exalted sense of identity (see also Hersh 2010). These discussions focused solely on the woman—her potential and desires (see Trofimova 1996; Yurchak 2005). Rodnina, an Olympic figure skater, writes, “From one side I look at figure skating and at myself soberly, without particular emotions, like a man. But on the other side, I want to invent something, search and invent. I want to find in myself and show something ... that is not yet disclosed” (1978, 12). Rodnina ties her goal of inventing and of discovering something new in herself to the fact that she is a woman: men’s existences are presented as less creative and more restricted, whereas women have “souls,” enormous inner possibilities (see also Lyuba in Hansson and Lidén 1983, 154; Voznesenskaya 1991, 355). She exalts women at the expense of men, turning a discourse that usually works in men’s favor—that men are rational and women are too emotional—into one in which women are supreme. She upholds the traditional gender binary, yet she privileges women’s side of the binary. In addition, through presenting women as more capable of having unique identities and thus breaking out of the collective, she presents them as more capable than men at dissenting against the Soviet regime and its values.

Larisa Latynina has a similar sentiment: gymnastics gives her “the satisfaction of creativity, of searching, self-expression in the highest sense of the word,” and she wishes that future Russian gymnasts would “show their individuality more, search more, challenge more, have more courage” (1970, 193). She presents her art as the most important thing for her, and sees its opportunities for interiority as its biggest draw. Later, she argues with a reporter who calls gymnasts “champion-dolls”: she tells him that “without spirituality, intellectual sources, and women’s beauty, there could be no authentic, big gymnastics” (1974, 14). Like Rodnina, she links women’s special qualities to something bigger and more significant than they are usually entrusted with. She “couldn’t not argue” (ibid., 14) with the reporter and his characterization of women as objects, and she instead shows that it is their unique qualities that makes gymnastics what it is. She exalts not the individual but the feminine individual.

Another category of identity-based dissent also puts the woman’s identity first, but in a norm-subverting way, drawing on traditional discourses of the family to explain why the woman must put herself first. This was surprisingly common in the sources, suggesting that it is a more acceptable method of dissent: women were more

comfortable expressing their opinions when couching them in the cloak of tradition. It is hard to say whether the women meant exactly what they said or if they were hiding further dissent within these seminormative statements; but we should “over-read” and remember that there is an alternate possibility to these statements.

The narrator of Natal’ya Baranskaya’s “Nedelya kak Nedelya,”¹³ Olga, explaining to her husband why she has to continue working instead of staying home with the children, says, “And how would I be, sitting at home? Mean, like a devil: I would growl at you all the time” (1989, 315). She is asserting her own needs, but using the language of traditional femininity to try to get her husband to agree—she is saying, in a sense, that her work allows her to be feminine. The substance of her statement is that she needs to continue working—it would “destroy” her (315) if she didn’t—but she slides this truth within a jacket of traditional femininity to make it more palatable. Baranskaya is credited with telling the truth about Soviet women’s lives for the first time and privileging women’s concerns and problems, which was rare in Soviet society; Baranskaya’s dissentive attitude in writing makes Ol’ga’s concern with her family feel more like an excuse than the honest reason for her dissent.

In Maria Arbatova’s memoir, she goes on a diatribe about women’s individuality: “I wanted to yell at them: ‘Stop! Try to be happy, even once a week! By any means! You will save yourself, your children, your family and ultimately the whole world’” (1998, 196). It seems at first that Arbatova wants women to be happy simply for their own sake, so that they not waste their lives in unhappiness; and Arbatova’s feminist perspective is certainly upheld throughout much of her memoir and in her short stories (1997). Yet Arbatova says that while women will save themselves that way, she then goes on to add “your children and your family” and finally “the whole world,” as if accepting the Soviet doctrine that the future is the woman’s problem, its failure her fault. It is as if she is unable to overcome this training and simply assert that women are allowed to want to be happy for themselves alone. But the fact of her telling women to be happy is probably dissentive: it implies that husbands and children cannot make women happy, and it tells women to think of themselves. It also gives women power over the wider world, not just over their families.

¹³ The story is widely considered as depicting women’s everyday existences extremely accurately (Sutcliffe 2009, 34). I therefore analyze it similarly to the memoirs, treating it as sociological. See chapter 5.

6.3 NONHETEROSEXUALITY¹⁴

In the “nonheterosexuality” category, dissent was chiefly in the fact that women were having nonheterosexual encounters or desires, which explicitly broke both Soviet and societal norms. (Women’s homosexuality was not illegal—as men’s was—but was treated as a mental disorder.) Homosexuality would probably be seen as a failure to uphold communist morality. However, the specifics of these stories enact different types of dissent; they also, through discussions of and rejections of women’s roles, provide a foil for the ways all women can dissent.

Vorontsova-Yur’yeva’s semiautobiographical novel *Sneg dlya Mariny* is about a narrator who considers herself a lesbian. But despite this, and her assertion that she is “not like everyone else” (2005a, 4-5), she follows a fairly typical (Soviet) life path. She marries a man and has a child; she does her husband’s laundry (2005b, 89)—she follows the gender requirements of marriage, housewife, and reproduction. Yet she gets married only because she lacks the “huge inner courage” required to break such a serious social norm as marriage (ibid., 46). She says that “a real Soviet woman was obligated to get married. A real Soviet woman was obligated to be a real woman. A real Soviet woman could abandon all her kids in the maternity hospital, lie around doing nothing, and even smother her paralyzed mother with a pillow, but she did not have the right to be a lesbian” (ibid.). According to her, being nonheterosexual was “the most heavy crime against humanity” in Soviet Russia (ibid.). The fact that she continued to live her inner life as a lesbian, seeking out lesbian encounters and carrying on an extended relationship with a woman, is itself dissentive (Healey 2002), but her fear of her own actions makes her commitment to them that much more dissentive: she upholds and solidifies her lesbian identity despite her belief that it is dangerous to do so. Her pretense at heterosexuality gives her greater freedom to act privately as a lesbian, much as other women mimicked femininity to mask or get away with dissent.

Ol’ga Krauze presents in her memoir a different model of Russian nonheterosexuality. Krauze does not marry or have children; she is a part of dissident

¹⁴ I use the word *nonheterosexual* because Russian women often do not accept or fit into categories of sexuality that were invented by the Western world. See Baer (2002), Essig (1999), Healey (1997), and Stella (2010, 2015) for further discussion of nonheterosexual Russian identities, and Healey (2002) for discussion of the Western invention of the hetero/homosexual binary.

circles; she wears boys' clothes (2009, 105), and people sometimes cannot tell whether she is a man or a woman (ibid., 103; see also Galitskaya 1984). She argues with a man at a club who asks her "whose" she is and tells her that it is "indecent to be without an owner"; she asserts her right to be without a husband or lover (ibid., 106). It is Krauze's comfort with being outside the realm of standard Soviet society that allows her to do all this. She is a musician and a "half-dissident" (ibid., 104), with no interest in conforming. The closest she comes is when she tries to subvert the marriage norm by acquiring a male ID so she can marry her girlfriend, who has somehow become pregnant (ibid., 42; 58). But ultimately it falls through—as in fact many of her relationships do, some because her girlfriends do not approve of her "bohemian lifestyle" (ibid., 101). Even for other nonheterosexual women, Krauze is too far outside the norm. Her extensive gender dissent—her violation of the norms of marriage, housewife, reproduction, and appearance—is made possible through her regime dissent.

6.4 NONEQUALITY

This category consists of women discussing society's lack of equality. These women take the Soviet system at its word, believing that they are equal and should be treated as equals but that society has not caught up, and the system has not done enough to promote equality. While they are expressing irritation with the Soviet government, they are also echoing a concern that the Soviet government itself had in the 1970s; the broader dissent is that they are wholly accepting the regime's pro forma discourse and rejecting society's—rejecting patriarchy. They are also specifically violating norms of feminine behavior, as constructed by society.

A common sentiment was that "equality is written into the law ... But after all, one can't ask the community to come home and educate one's own husband!" (Lyuba in Hansson and Lidén 1983, 152). Many women found that "men do not want to lose their privileges which they have enjoyed over centuries" (Olga in Buckley 1986b, 86).

In "Nedelya kak Nedelya," Ol'ga invokes Soviet rhetoric in defending her right to equality. When her husband suggests that she stay home with their children instead of working, she answers, "And you want to confine me for the whole year? ... We don't

agree on that! All this boredom’—I also looked around the kitchen—‘for me alone, and you get all the interesting stuff. ... Capitalist!’” (1989, 314). As her anger heightens, she draws on early Soviet discourse in which everyone who opposed the goals of the revolution—in this case the emancipation of women—was a capitalist. She does not want to confine herself to the traditional feminine roles of housewife and mother probably for personal reasons, but she draws on Soviet discourse because it’s more convincing. She uses the Soviet system as an excuse for her own desires, treating it as a useful way for her to avoid the obligations imposed on her by society. She presents herself as an ideal Soviet citizen, a real builder of communism, fighting against her husband’s bourgeois preoccupations, all as a way of fighting the patriarchal value system. Yet as was seen in section 6.2, she switches to the discourse of traditional femininity shortly thereafter: she switches registers and gender structures depending on which is the most useful, all while trying to advance her goal of committing to her work.

There is an interesting subset of the “nonequality” category in women’s writings about their famous husbands. In Lyudmila Krutikova-Abramova’s memoir *Dom v Verkole*, she writes adoringly about her writer-husband Fyodor Abramov, usually presenting him as an impressive, important figure. But she occasionally makes scathing remarks about gender. She criticizes her husband for his referring to her, disparagingly, as a “lady”: “But how was I a ‘lady’? At the university—lectures, students, meetings; home—housekeeping, everyday life, and also academic work ... The building and housekeeping duties oppressed Fyodor. He couldn’t stand monotony” (1988, 79). The fact that she wrote this suggests that she thought that expressing her opinion about gender equality was worth presenting him in a bad light. Her listing her occupations both shows how busy she was and also rhetorically expresses the monotony in her life—in a subtle dig at Fyodor, who “couldn’t stand monotony” but doesn’t have to do half of what she does. She contrasts herself with “ladies” (the Russian word she uses, *barynya*, calls to mind aristocrats and serf owners)—bourgeois women who don’t have to do anything for themselves. Her dislike of the term expresses her preference for Soviet values over traditional ones. She’s clearly offended by both her husband’s referring to her in bourgeois terms and his failure to understand how difficult her life is.

6.5 “SOVIET DISSENT” AND TRADITIONAL FEMININITY

The “Soviet dissent” category encompassed both basic expressions of dissent—Maria Arbatova’s discussion of her dissemination of samizdat (1998, 258); Olga Krauze’s participation in dissident circles (2009, 104)—and overt expressions of disagreement with the Soviet gender ideology. Most of these latter supported traditional femininity—believing that “our women suffer from equality” (Liza in Hansson and Lidén 1983, 24)—so I have combined it with the “traditional femininity” category in this analysis. Some of these women use traditional social norms as their method or reason for dissenting against the Soviet regime. In other cases, their gender enables a particular type of antiregime dissent: that is, there are certain types of dissent that employed womanhood or femininity, so only women could engage in it. This dissent was easier to engage in, less risky, because the viewpoints/characteristics it was based on were endorsed by society. This dissent defies some regime requirements, such as production, equality with men, and participating in society.

Maria Arbatova is explicit about her hatred of the Soviet system. She was a dissident in her youth; when she was older and had children, they became the reason for her dissent. She writes: “If I was asked why I hate socialism most of all, I would answer: because it separates a sick child from his mother” (1998, 173). She ties her dissent specifically to her experience of motherhood. But she also blames her motherhood for the fact that she stopped participating in active dissidence: “Having become a mother, I stepped away from dissident activities, I had no time ... My priorities simply changed” (ibid., 258). Having children moves her from a dissident to a dissenter: she hates the system just as much as ever, but her reasons for doing so have shifted, rooted more in her maternal identity, and she is no longer politically active. She doesn’t give up other types of dissent entirely, though, noting that “it was the Soviet kitchen—the woman’s government—that became the symbol of the new humanitarian standard, of intellectual space and free-thinking” (ibid., 193). Women, by being confined to traditional roles in the kitchen, are in charge of a space of Soviet dissent; they own Soviet dissent through their acceptance of traditional attitudes.

Another example is from Soviet dissident Lyudmila Alekseyeva. She uses her femininity—how society views her gender—in the service of her dissident activities. Being questioned about her relationship with a dissident by the KGB, she realizes that

“if I reduced our conversations to a boy-girl sort of thing, few other questions would follow” (1990, 51). Because the regime, based on its own patriarchal attitudes, deprivileged women as possible dissidents, Alekseyeva could temporarily embody a feminine attitude and remove herself from suspicion. She presented herself as a woman, not a dissident—the two identities were incompatible. In this case her “femininity” is not inherent or embodied but a disguise she uses: she exploits society’s assumptions to protect herself as a dissident.

An additional example is that of writer Lidiya Ginzburg. Ginzburg’s lack of acceptance of the regime seems rooted in a “feminine” worldview. She sees women’s values, strengths, characteristics as essentially in opposition to the regime, and the way to fight against it. She writes, “The classic example of the lack of sense is in everyday business ... The best symbol of goallessness of existence is washing dishes. The way out of the rigmarole is in a higher order. We say, in the idea of the family, or in gratifying a beloved person, or in your own life-building” (1989, 288). At first it looks here like Ginzburg is objecting to the traditionally female activity of washing dishes—objecting to society’s making women do such a pointless activity—but she’s actually writing in a larger sense about the pointlessness of everyday life, maybe in the way the Soviet system has removed all the beauty and worth from life. Her focus on “a higher order” calls to mind those dissenters who chose to ignore the regime on a day-to-day basis and focus on how to make their own lives more meaningful. Ginzburg chooses some feminine methods of doing so—family and loved ones—putting the truly worthwhile, more essential aspects of traditionally feminine nature above the pointless, meaningless ones. But she also adds “individual life-building,” which goes against the Soviet regime’s emphasis on the collective and the subjugation of the individual to society. Ginzburg, in rhetorically connecting this individual life-building so closely in her list with respect for the family and loved ones, suggests that it, too, is a feminine activity. Her multifaceted dissent ultimately connects the very idea of dissent with that of femininity—the most powerful dissent is that produced by the feminine.

Yuliya Eidelman also defies the Soviet system to indulge her feminine nature. On many occasions, she subjugates her own desires and needs to her husband Nathan’s. This occasionally veers into the territory of Soviet dissent—in Scott’s sense, in which minor acts of sabotage count as dissent (J. Scott 1985). That is, “Starting in 1972 we

went on trips together. Of course, working at a school, it wasn't at all easy for me to get out of my obligations. My poor doctor friend! What diseases she found in me so that she could give me illegal doctors' notes" (2003, 140). Yuliya's refusing her work obligations can be seen as a form of dissent, since work was a requirement of the Soviet state. Her refusal to work is more interesting because it is with the purpose of taking trips with her lover; her relationship is more important than her work. She is behaving like a traditional woman; her "emancipation" gets in the way of her romantic life, and so she throws it aside.

This action becomes more significant several years later, when she quits her job to work for Nathan: "I had left my job at the school: Nathan had demanded it, arguing that my 100 rubles could be compensated for in half an hour, writing some sort of review. 'You spend all day at the school and because of that you can't get a lot done for me. Think for yourself what's more important to you'" (2003, 195). Eventually she gives in to this patriarchal/traditional discourse. She obeys patriarchal values while dissenting against the regime's mandate that she work and that she consider herself equal to men. Yet to be fair, she is also a societal dissenter: she is Nathan's illicit lover for most of their relationship, and she soldiers on in the relationship despite society's extremely strong disapprobation. There is a lot she is willing to endure for the sake of her relationship, and perhaps in putting her happiness first, she is dissenting against norms of passivity, modesty, and sacrificing the self.

6.6 UNFEMININITY

The final category of analysis is about women who behave or think in ways that are not traditionally "feminine," according to the Soviet and societal gender structures. The category encompasses activities or rhetoric surrounding not having children or not wanting children; not marrying or wanting to marry; expressing "unfeminine" personality traits, like aggression or lack of people skills; or rejecting typically feminine character traits. The dissent here focuses on or is in some way based out of notions of femininity.

A number of women mentioned not wanting to be married, or being opposed to family life. Olga Kamayurova said, “I am not dependent on anyone and no one can demand that I clean or put dinner on the table. You can’t believe how much that frees you on a spiritual level ... I’m not all that typical in this regard. A woman, after all, is supposed to appreciate the family and the home. But not me. I like being alone” (Raleigh 2012, 260). She contrasts herself with what the Soviet woman is “supposed” to do; she’s both comfortable with being very different from this kind of woman, and committed to being so, both in thought and in practice. She doesn’t question the standard narrative of what a woman is or should be but simply goes about living her life in her own way, accepting that she’s not a standard feminine woman but finding that the benefits of living as she wants outweighs the social cost of not conforming.

Elena Petushkova, an Olympic dressage athlete, writes in her memoir about how she had a baby but continued to put her work ahead of her family: “29 May I gave birth to Vlada. At the end of June I was again in the saddle. Various people criticized me ... They asked me to go [to a competition], but how could a two-month-old daughter of a single mother be left alone? An experienced nurse took us under her care. And I packed my suitcase” (1979, 53–54). She is open about giving priority to work over family, acknowledging and dismissing people’s criticisms; she sweeps away her concerns about her two-month-old daughter in a single sentence. She defies both the late Soviet regime’s insistence that women find the greatest satisfaction in being mothers, and society’s belief that women were mothers first and everything else second. She does all of this, moreover, in a rather unconcerned manner, treating it as natural or perhaps inevitable.

There are also “unfeminine” orientations toward work. These include Galina Aleksandrovna, a “woman–worker-bee. She had two kids, but nevertheless managed to be the first to see all the premieres in the Moscow movie theaters” (Zemskova 1985, 129), as part of her job in television. Zemskova accords her high respect for this: she is impressed that this woman’s children do not hinder her from devoting herself to her work. There is also Raissa Nemchinskaya, the circus performer described by Marina Goldovskaya: “Work was sacred to her, a holy shrine, and everything that touched this shrine had to be perfect. Raissa Maksimilianova was unappeasable not only toward any negligence but even any tepidness toward her work, no matter who it came from ... The

sweet, smiling woman would in these situations suddenly turn into a fury, attacking the hapless victim with all the passion of her rabid temperament. But I can't remember a single time that she did not get what she thought was necessary—not for herself but for her act" (Goldovskaya 2002, 69; with translation assistance from Bouis 2006, 69). She devotes all her passion to her work and turns into a violent (and rhetorically very unfeminine) creature: "fury," "rabid," "attacking."

Vera Benderova provides another interesting example of an "unfeminine" attitude toward work. A reporter for *Komsomol'skaya Pravda*, she writes, "I tried to hold in my palms the drops of this love ... love for the newspaper. For me—the first and only" (1983, 256). She turns the traditionally feminine language of love on its head, applying it to her work. Almost in the way that other women used their femininity to avoid being censured for dissentive activities, she uses traditional women's discourse subversively, using it in the opposite way from that which society originally intended it.

There are also women who defy the characteristics that society tells them that they are supposed to possess. Yuliya Eidelman writes that she does not have sufficient "softness in relationships with people, tact, intelligence" (Eidelman 2003, 142), unlike another woman of her acquaintance. Liza is often unable to do the shopping because "as sure as anything I'll start arguing with someone, complain to the manager, or hit somebody; that's just the way I am" (in Hansson and Lidén 183, 7). They present their lack of feminine characteristics in a vaguely regretful but resigned way—this is how they are, and they cannot change it.

Finally, there are more intentional rejections of femininity. Gymnast Larisa Latynina, on an official trip to Mexico, surprises a male professor by enjoying the *corrida*: "'I was surprised,' said one famous scientist from our delegation, 'that you, a representative of such an elegant type of sport, are going to such a violent, sordid performance.' 'But I like it, professor,' I answered, increasing his surprise to the limits. But at the same time, why did I like the *corrida*?' (1970, 194) The professor expects her to be more feminine, befitting not only her actual gender but her role as a gymnast; but she objects to this characterization. Later, she realizes why she likes it: she describes the Olympics as a *corrida* and the gymnasts on her team as "hard-as-nails warriors" (ibid., 199). She goes on: "What sweet, good girls! But I needed them to become meaner, more stubborn, more violent. For our poetic gymnastics? Yes, yes, yes, for our poetic

gymnastics” (ibid., 200). She understands that even a sport that looks “poetic” and “elegant” to outsiders is “violent” and “sordid” on the inside—it involves competition, strength, stubbornness. She also ties her rejection of femininity to the Soviet regime. She recalls reading press coverage of the gymnastics team: “I remember how many times it cut my ears: ‘our women’s collective is good,’ ‘collectivist,’ ‘worker’ ... I won’t make a fuss about it when a year remains until the violent Olympic corrida” (ibid., 199). She connects the proper Soviet roles of “collectivist” and “worker” with the feminine roles of “sweet, good girls” (ibid., 200); she seems to expect her coaches to throw off both their Soviet-imposed societal roles and their Soviet-imposed femininity. She explicitly connects social gender roles to the gender roles imposed by the regime, and rejects both of them, dissenting—proudly—against the regime and society by doing whatever it takes to succeed in her work.

Seven: Discussion

7.1 GENDER REQUIREMENTS AND IDEAL DISSENT

I will now connect my data to the gender requirements, categories of ideal dissent, and definitions of dissent defined above. Gender requirements—based on the state’s gender structure and society’s firm expectations—were simultaneously followed and rejected by most women; they followed some and ignored others, and changed which they followed and which they rejected over the courses of their narratives. Some requirements were more likely to be followed: most women in the sample did “produce and reproduce,” or work and have children. Most took responsibility for the household; some complained about it or objected to this responsibility, but they accepted it. Most were self-sacrificing to some extent, though the narratives they told about this quality were different than those the regime or society tried to give them: they sacrificed themselves not for society, communism, or their families but because they had no other option—they had a lot to do, and they did it. Many considered their own identities and personal development highly important, but often in daily practice they ended up putting their families, households, and jobs first.

The gender requirements that were more likely to be flouted fell on the side of characteristics. Most of the women in the sample were not “passive, shy, and modest”; they were aggressive, fought for what they wanted, and argued. Some women considered some of these personal characteristics failings—i.e., they weren’t feminine enough—but it did not seem to be a major concern. Many women also had no interest in upholding society’s morals or upholding communist morality: some raised their

children in defiance of the Soviet system (Arbatova 1998); some were not heterosexual; most barely mentioned communism. It did not seem that they took morals as their personal responsibility.

Overall, the dissent I found fit in reasonably well with the ideal dissent I proposed (see section 5.5). The dissent I found was less simplistic than the ideal dissent categories, and few women were entirely comfortable with their dissentive activities or embraced them wholly; but they were there to be found. The various qualities, characters, behaviors, and actions in these women form particular kinds of dissent at various points in time, but no single, cohesive dissentive position—each person contained many dissentive people within them.

There were correspondences in the primary-source materials with my definition of dissent—not internalizing a regime’s norms; attempting to make space within a culture for one’s own form of being; and not agreeing with or assenting to societal rules or norms—though, again, the dissent was inconsistent and sometimes reluctant. There was widespread “internal disagreement” and refusal to assent or simple lack of assenting to the regime’s values; these women “thought differently,” worked to make their lives more livable in spite of their powerlessness in the face of the regime and society, and were creative in their use of the system to their advantage.

Women did participate in gender dissent: many chose to or naturally acted “masculine,” as society and the regime constructed it, and others exalted feminine characteristics. In general, their dissent was internal, focusing on allowing them to live more satisfying lives as best they could—the personal or private corollary to workplace sabotage in its goals and effects (J. Scott 1985). But they generally did not participate in the wider goals of gender dissent: transcending invisibility as people in everyday life and the kitchen (metaphorical or otherwise); refusing to be capital-W Women; creating “larger spaces” or expanding the terms of cultural membership. They remained outliers—even if all women were outliers. The core of what it meant to be a woman or what a woman should be did not change and was not negotiated, even when it was not obeyed.

Not internalizing norms could be done through assenting to some of society’s norms over some of the regime’s norms (the bulldog mother): Yuliya Eidelman and Maria Arbatova put their husbands or children and thus their “feminine” qualities ahead

of the needs of the state, using their femininity to dissent against the regime. Arbatova's femininity is closely related to, or actually *is*, her dissent. She uses her traditional femininity against the state—she is being a woman “at” the state, as opposed to simply being a woman who lives in the state. Rodnina and Latynina, and perhaps Ginzburg, also fit in this category—they saw women as in some sense “better” than men because of their explicitly feminine qualities. They saw femininity as a way to enhance and enlarge their individuality; their femininity was what allowed them to depart from the Soviet norms of the collective and explore their own identities. The women who put themselves first, supposedly for the ultimate gain of their families, were also dissenting in this way: they used regime and/or societal values as their excuse or method of dissenting against other regime/societal values. They used the discourse and techniques of the gender order against that very order; some used their femininity to “get away with” dissent (Alekseyeva), either because women were not taken seriously as dissenters or because following societal gender requirements was so important that it might have overshadowed the fact that it also embodied dissent against the regime's gender (or other) requirements.

Other women followed the regime's stated rules and fought the patriarchy by asserting their rights or taking work as the pillar of their identity (the worker-bee). Zemsikova's identity and her work were more important to her than the feminine qualities she was supposed to have; the qualities the regime said she should have were irrelevant to her life, so she ignored them. Krutikova-Abramova and Ol'ga in “Nedelya kak Nedelya” used regime values to fight patriarchy in their personal lives. However, it was rare for women to fully disengage from the patriarchy. Some women lived *vne*, in Yurchak's terms, or in a state of “internal emigration” (Viola 2000, 68), living as they wished without regard for outside rules (the white raven)—living within an individual gender order that they built for themselves out of the acceptable scraps of the ones society and the regime gave them. These internal gender structure did not reject society or the regime wholesale—they rejected pieces while accepting others, using both accommodation and resistance as a way of asserting individual identity. In the Soviet context, this identity struggle could be considered a further form of dissent. Many of the women who had dissentive gender identities can be put in this category—Lida and Natasha accepted the Soviet/societal gender order but allowed themselves personally to

live outside it. Natasha in *Sneg dlya Mariny* may have done this as well: her dissent was in her identity, rather than the actions she took that were observable to outsiders. She also used the regime's and society's gender orders as a cover: by assenting to it publicly, she gained the option to dissent from it privately (see Stella 2015). Ginzburg may also fit in here: her individual identity appeared to be her reigning value; it happened to lean toward the feminine, but it seemed above all individual.

Finally, there were women who dissented against both patriarchy and state, magnifying their dissent by the fact that it works on multiple registers. Goldovskaya objected to the gender restrictions placed on her in her industry (filmmaking) and the different treatment of women, and also did not consider her work a tool of the state as she was supposed to; she combined her antipatriarchal values with a strong anti-USSR stance, eventually moving to the US. Maya Plisetskaya objected to the state's control over her artistic work, and did not have children because doing so would affect her work: she refused multiple state and societal mandates. Ol'ga Krauze was a lesbian/dissident, defying the gender order by her masculine appearance and lack of interest in men and defying the state by participating in dissident musical activities.

Another behavior, that of trying to integrate the two mandates, could also fit into this category: women were subversive by introducing femininity into the masculine realm of work. The female engineers profiled in *My Kamazovtsy* (Kulikovskaya 1976) mention their desire for better work clothes: they are trying to integrate different aspects of their identities and create new identities that don't automatically emulate the masculine form of that identity. They assert that their masculine-sounding job can be part of a feminine identity as well; they create a new type of woman, in defiance of both the state's woman and society's woman, that simultaneously dissents against both and pleases both.

7.2 ANSWERING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Women did explore gender in non-state-sanctioned and non-society-sanctioned ways in the Soviet Union—by not having kids, by not living solely for their husbands, by putting themselves and their work first, by spending time thinking about their

individual identities. Among the women in this sample, gender dissent was fairly common. That is, most of the women seem not to have blindly followed the gender structures and did not try to “remedy” their gender dissent. There is a concern here that the criteria are too loose—that based on my definition of dissent and the gender requirements, it would be impossible for any woman not to dissent, especially when we take into account the fact that I am observing not “dissentive women” but moments of dissent within individual women. There is no easy answer for this issue, except perhaps to remember Abu-Lughod’s (1990) request that we not romanticize resisters: that perhaps all women do dissent in some way or another, but that that fact alone is not totally significant. It is more what this dissent tells us—about society, about the history and climate of the era, and especially about the women themselves—that matters.

This thesis suggests some ways that all people, not just Soviet Russian women, can use gender to expand life possibilities and enact individual lives while disregarding hegemonic social structures. Drawing on one gender discourse rather than another is one possibility; this is easier because the activity is upheld by a gender structure. There is also the possibility of using the power they do have—in the Soviet context, that would be kitchen-table dissidence or exaggerating their femininity to get what they want—to make an unpleasant situation more bearable. People can enact individuality through drawing on pieces of the gender norms they are most comfortable with: they can dissent while consenting, and they do not have to go beyond what is legal or acceptable to have their own identities, as many of the women here did. Their cobbling together bits of the gender structures in forming their own genders demonstrates this: by thinking about gender and opting in to some parts of the gender structures, they are making unique, individual decisions and asserting their abilities to choose their own identities.

Based on the theoretical framework and the data I uncovered, I do find that individual nontraditional thoughts and conceptions can be considered dissent, though they did seem less “dissent-y” than more active forms of dissent. Some of the women in *Moscow Women* (Hansson and Lidén 1983) and Vorontsova-Yur’yeva (2005a and b) did not act very dissentively: they lived according to norms while having a rich, entirely different inner/secret life. Per Bayat (2010), this would be less significant than dissent that has an “encroaching” or “progressive” effect; it’s not clear that there has been

much encroachment at all, with gendered norms in Russian society still being quite solid and limiting. Yet exactly because no gender dissent was particularly effective, it is not worth privileging more overt resistance against the smaller, thought-and-conception dissent that everyday women undertook. By being aware of the different possibilities for different types of thoughts, we can at least recognize the diversity of Soviet women's experiences, and the diversity of life even under repressive governments.

The fact of these women's sticking to their unique individual identities in the face of social pressure is more significant in a state in which the individual was supposed to be less important than the collective and the common goal was supposed to be more important than any individual's dreams. Since the ideology had become less important by the Brezhnev era, this argument may not hold as much weight as it would in the Stalin era. But the state was still there, and still repressive—people were still being imprisoned and put in mental hospitals for dissent—and the decades of social control preceding this era also left its mark on people's psyches.

I therefore argue that women's actively maintaining an individual identity is automatically somewhat dissentive in the Soviet Union, whereas it would be slightly less so in, for example, the United States, where officially women are supposed to be able to do what they want but where social control is still strong. The technical, even if ignored, ideology of the Soviet Union adds still another strand to social control; the state had influence, and defying it in whatever small way still took courage. Even if they didn't respect or acknowledge the power of the state, people knew that in defying society's norms they were often also defying the state and pushing, even if weakly, against the state's walls.

The question of whether gender dissent has any meaning for society beyond the lives of the individuals concerned—whether it changed anything—now seems wrongheaded to me. Gender dissent should not be defined by whether women changed society, since that was rarely their goal; it should be evaluated by whether their actions and thoughts allowed them to live more authentically, or to have unique identities. Defining “effectiveness” based on societal change, and even asking whether this type of dissent is meaningful for society, also puts women into the same role that patriarchy does: that of sacrificing themselves for others, being responsible for society's morals, and doing “emotional labor” (Zimmerman 2015). This question asks women to take

their personal struggles into the open, to use themselves for society's gain. If it were not important to women to conceive of gender differently than how the regime/society did, they would not have done so, and therefore these gender conceptions were extremely significant to their lives—so while it was not effective in the traditional sense, it was individually, and that is more significant here. Ultimately, this form of women's dissent had little meaning for society; little has changed in terms of the patriarchal gender order from Soviet times to the present day. But that is not the point; the point is what this dissent does for individual women.

7.3 FRAGMENTED IDENTITIES, FRAGMENTED DISSENT

The postmodern and feminist conceptions of subjectivity mean that women are not singular subjects with constant, unchanged identities (Sheehan 2004). This is why it is valid to consider various “points” of dissent even within an overall climate of conformity within each woman: each woman may at times be a dissenter, at times a conformist, because she is not constantly the same single person. A woman's dissentive actions are significant at the time when she does them because at that time, they help constitute who she is as a person. In performing dissent, she is also performing her identity, because her identity is predicated on her performance of self (Braidotti 1994; Kristeva 1986; Yurchak 2005, 18). The Soviet Union endorsed this fragmentation of identity theorized by postmodernism and gender performativity: it promoted two different ideals of womanhood—that of women being completely equal to men, in the sense of working and accomplishing outside the home, and that of women needing to be feminine. This is why the postmodern insistence on the negotiation of identity may be a strangely good fit for research into the late Soviet Union, which tried to mandate “monolithic uniformity ... [but] contained disunity and disarray at deeper levels” (Kharkhordin 1999, 279). This is also why it is so easy, and necessary, for women to dissent in so many ways—most performances of gender are dissent against something, if they are well-considered and not random. The *Pravda* article “O vremeni i o sebe” is a useful example of this mandate of duality: the article notes the many accomplishments of Soviet women outside the house, and then finishes with “Women

are nevertheless the weak sex!” (Dvornikov and Stepichev 1977). No matter what women do or what they are capable of, they still *are* the same thing that they always have been. It is against this theory of gender that I present Butler—that women are what they do (and think).

This identity mixing is clear in many of the women in this study. The women in *Moscow Women* all espoused an extremely traditional, patriarchal sentiment at some point but had much less traditional/normative statements at other points. Witness Nadezhda Pavlovna, who, when a male professor asked her why she was bothering to look for a job when she had a husband who could support her, answered, “Your wife is a professor. Can’t she support you so that you don’t have to work?” Yet a few pages later she says that men and women should have very different relationships to their children (Hansson and Lidén 1983, 86, 89). Tanya, in *Soviet Social Scientists Talking*, speaks positively about women’s nurturing role in the family, but she also says that the problem with women’s legal equality is that traditional attitudes about gender roles persist (Buckley 1986b, 21–22). While in some ways Arbatova and Eidelman used their femininity to dissent against the regime, other aspects of their personalities and lives—Arbatova’s youthful dissidence, Eidelman’s devotion to her extramarital relationship—dissented against society. In short, they are complex human beings.

I argue that this fragmentation, shifting of opinions, and extensive contradiction is inevitable. Acknowledging it, and allowing women who were not consistent in their attitudes about gender to still be considered dissenters, bestows upon them much more respect than if we demanded that they constantly believe and act upon the same thing. To demand perfection of the women we study would be to impose the same patriarchal frame on them that society does.

7.4 WOMEN AS THE BEARERS OF DISSENT

I have discussed earlier how women are cut out of dissent by academics’ and dissidents’ definitions; the difficulty of defining dissent and the undesirability of the task, which leads to a gap where there should be a clear explanation of why women’s actions matter; and dissident/resistance figures’ uninterest in including women in

“their” movements (see Amireh 2012; Zakharova 2013). As a counterpoint, I present here the possibility that women’s gender dissent is inherently more radical than dissidence or other male forms of dissent, and that while largely unrealized, it has broader transformative abilities.

According to Foucault, power relations in the family help hold up the sovereign ruler, or the state. He suggests that even a gender order that seems to be at odds with the official ideology of the state could uphold the state’s ideology (see Foucault 1980, 188). Thus women who dissent against society’s ideology, even a societal ideology that contradicts the state’s ideology, are fighting against the confines of society, threatening disorder, and ultimately threatening the state—their dissent is magnified.

There is also the Kristevan method of dissent (1986), which would suggest that Soviet women are more able to dissent, or do so automatically, because they are not truly part of the system; the system was created for men, so by being in it they are defying it. Ortner (1995) has noted that resistance studies have become “thinner” because academics have ignored subalterns’ distinct culture, which is not just a reaction to the dominant culture; perhaps there are distinct women’s cultures (plural) that ignore the dominators and in so doing resist the hegemonic structures around them. In that sense they are more “dissent-y” than those in the dissident movement because they thought in an entirely different way, not for or against what the state gave them but in a different register. The promise of this form of dissent was not fulfilled. Nevertheless, in fighting against patriarchy in whatever limited manner, women fought against a far more entrenched institution than did the dissidents, who aimed merely to change the Soviet system.

Eight: Conclusion

8.1 SUMMARY

This thesis aimed to clarify the concept of dissent, particularly everyday dissent and non-explicitly-political dissent, and to use this conceptualization to advance a theory of gender dissent. This conceptualization was then related to Soviet women to explore the ways in which they used gender as a tactic to resist society's and the regime's encroachment on their lives.

Using discourse analysis to look at the words women wrote or spoke and at their larger context, I analyzed primary sources, mainly memoirs written in Russian. This analysis confirmed dissentive possibilities that previous scholars had suggested—usually without categorizing them as dissent—and allowed me to express my own ideas, based on the data, about how women were able to use their gender to dissent. The data showed that women dissented against the regime, against society, and/or against both. The most common way to dissent involved women's rejection of “feminine” characteristics and ignoring the mandate to put their families and husbands first; many women found their work or artistic pursuits to be more constitutive of their identities.

The results of the study showed that women do perform a variety of actions—including purely discursive actions—to negotiate gender orders to fit their identities. They internalize the norms of society and the regime, since it is nearly impossible not to, but they also fight against them, either intentionally or not, and in so doing expand the possibilities for their lives and live in ways that feel natural for them as people, not just as women or tools of men or the Communist Party. The integration of the

theoretical framework with the data shows that we should indeed consider these actions as dissent. In living for themselves, when they could, women tried to forge individual identities that went against the regime's and society's images of women and against the mandate that individual identity be subjugated to the larger good. This research has contributed to the study of the late Soviet Union; women's studies; and the theoretical field of dissent, and has shown how women have, in fact, been involved in Soviet dissent, including through negotiations of their gender.

8.2 FURTHER RESEARCH

This thesis opens up extensive possibilities for future research. The first would be to do an expanded version of the original study with interviews or archival research, opening the study to women from a wider variety of classes, environments, and backgrounds. It would also be possible to expand the study to look for gender dissent among men. Another possibility would be extending the study into other Soviet republics during the same time period and comparing the extent and scope of gender dissent across different societies, such as between Russia and Kazakhstan or Russia and Estonia, to show the influence of different gender traditions on gender dissent within the same regime.

Further research could also extend the study into contemporary Russia. There is already extensive research on gender in post-Soviet Russia (Holmgren 2013; Johnson 2014; Johnson and Saarinen 2013; Turbine 2015), but not as much on nonnormative gender expressions (some exceptions are Essig 1999 and Stella 2007, 2015). Focusing on contemporary Russia might expand the theoretical possibilities of the study: it would allow researchers to discuss the concept of dissent when there is no legally enforced ideology. It could also lead to an interesting discussion on how the possibilities for dissent and the enforcement of social norms changes under authoritarianism. There might also be more—or more open—gender dissent among men in contemporary than Soviet Russia (see Fedorova, no date).

Further research could also use my concept of gender dissent in different societies. My attempt to broaden the concept of dissent could open up research

possibilities in related fields that suffer from the same problem of taking men's actions and attitudes as the norm and ignoring women's actions and attitudes, which may be hidden beneath the surface but are equally relevant and important.

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Appendix 1: A Brief History of the Brezhnev Era

Life during the Brezhnev, Andropov, and Chernenko regimes is usually seen as a time of “stagnation” (Bacon 2002, 1), when ideology was falling apart, the economy was weak, and society was “gray” (Millar 1985, 697). Yet in postcommunist surveys, the Brezhnev era is given the highest satisfaction rating of any era in Russian history; “stagnation”—or “stability”—worked well for many people (Bacon 2002, 5). The USSR was a major superpower during this time (ibid., 1), and daily life was easier. The social contract of the Brezhnev era can be characterized as “if you shut up, don’t ask for more rights and accept the rule of the bureaucracy then we will supply you with consumer goods” (Kagarlitsky quoted in ibid., 16).

Brezhnev’s regime was harsher and less tolerant than Khrushchev’s. Brezhnev himself ruled by consensus and through delegating rather than as a dictator; he developed a policy of “stability of cadres,” limiting turnover in government (Bacon 2002, 15; Hosking 1990, 377). He was a less idealistic, more pragmatic ruler than Khrushchev had been (Kenez 2006, 214). The next party secretary, Andropov, did not propose major systemic reforms, either; but he was extremely opposed to dissidence, even more so than Brezhnev (ibid., 244). The briefness of his reign, however, prevented him from doing much. Chernenko, the leader after Andropov, was sick for his entire time in office and accomplished little. Throughout this thesis I characterize the late Soviet era as “the Brezhnev era”—both for simplicity and because the Brezhnev era dominated the era in terms of both length and substance; gender norms in particular did not change much under Andropov and Chernenko.

The Brezhnev era saw the growth of consumer society (Vinokurova 2007) despite overall falling economic growth rates (Hosking 1990, 382). People continued

moving from communal apartments into private apartments (Attwood 2010, 195). The black market and shadow economy developed and were officially tolerated: the regime and the people struck a deal that the shadow economy would be allowed, and that in return the people would tolerate repression because their lives were better economically (Millar 1985, 697–98).

The ideology of the time was called “developed socialism” (Sandle 2002, 147). Brezhnev had retrenched from Khrushchev’s ideals: he had no timetable for the achievement of communism, instead asserting that the USSR had reached a stable, comfortable intermediate step (Kenez 2006, 214–216; Millar 1985, 695). Communist ideology lost much of its previous importance at this time, for both the government and society as a whole. This lack of a strong ideological underpinning enabled intrastructural dissent—the phenomenon of people’s not wanting or attempting to overthrow the system but at the same time viewing it as deeply flawed and objecting to many of its central ideas (Tompson 2003, 107). Many people read samizdat, listened to magnitizdat, and immersed themselves in Western pop culture; society was far from monolithic or dull (Fürst 2013).

The formal dissident movement arose in 1965 and broadened in the 1970s to include religious, nationalist, feminist, and other subsets (Tompson 2003, 105). Dissidents worked to promote human rights in the USSR; a major subset of their activities was their attempt to make the USSR follow its own laws. Rather than trying to overthrow the system, they attempted to improve it and make it more livable (Barghoorn 1983, 147–150). The state did not tolerate dissidents: many were threatened during chats with the KGB, put in mental hospitals, or sent to gulags.

Appendix 2: Data Sources

I present here the women whose interviews and memoirs were used in this thesis, for both the normative gender order section and the primary data section. Articles whose primary purpose was not the expression of personal viewpoints (Alexandrovna, Sariban, Dvornikov and Stepichev, Vecheslova) are not included. The women are presented according to first name because some last names were not known and because some women were known by pseudonyms. Ages are given where known; they refer to the year(s) that the data stems from. In the case of writers who wrote after the time period, I give their approximate age during the time they were writing about rather than their age at the time of writing.

Anna. 21. Moscow. Hairdresser, mother, and wife. Generally adheres to traditional femininity; uses clothes to express her identity. In Hansson and Lidén, *Moscow Women* (interview).

Anna. Social scientist. In Buckley, *Soviet Social Scientists Talking* (interview).

Elena Stepanovna. 70s. Moscow. Retired librarian, writer, grandmother. Sees problems in the Soviet Union's treatment of women. In Hansson and Lidén, *Moscow Women* (interview).

Erlena Vasil'evna Lur'ye. 52. Leningrad. Presents happiness as relating to friendship and work. In Lur'ye (diary entry).

Galina Kulikovskaya. Soviet/Russian journalist. Notable in this project for her account of the KamAZ factory in Siberia, in particular her commentary on and apparent admiration for the women who worked there. In Kulikovskaya, *My—Kamazovtsy* (journalism).

Irina Rodnina. 29. Soviet/Russian figure skater. Won three Olympic medals and is now a politician in the Duma, in the United Russia party. Notable for her strong defense of her sport and the women who participated in it. In Rodnina, *Negladkiy Led* (memoir).

Katya. Social scientist. In Buckley, *Soviet Social Scientists Talking* (interview).

Larisa Latynina. 30s. Location. Soviet/Russian gymnast. Eighteen-time Olympic medal winner; later a coach for the Soviet women's gymnastics team. Notable for her occasional rejection of gender norms in her writings and in her gymnastics. In Latynina, *Ravnovesie* and *Kak Zovut Etu Devochku?* (memoirs).

Lida. 31. Moscow. Geologist and mother. Devoted to her work and wants to do even more interesting work; uninterested in men/marriage; says she wishes she had been a boy. In Hansson and Lidén, *Moscow Women* (interview).

Lidiya Ginzburg. 70s. St. Petersburg. Prominent Soviet/Russian writer. Notable for, among other things, her writings about her experiences in the siege of Leningrad. The data in this project was taken from essays written in 1972 and 1978. In Ginzburg, *Chelovek za Pis'mennym Stolom* (essays/diary).

Liza. 28. Moscow. Writer and mother. Notable for her love of her work (writing) and her rejection of typical “feminine” characteristics. In Hansson and Lidén, *Moscow Women* (interview).

Lyalya. 22. Moscow; originally from Uzbekistan. Student, mother, and wife. Adheres to traditional values. In Hansson and Lidén, *Moscow Women* (interview).

Lyuba. 32. Moscow. Artist, mother, and wife. Devoted to both her art and her family. In Hansson and Lidén, *Moscow Women* (interview).

Lyudmila Alekseyeva. 50s. Moscow. Prominent Soviet dissident. The memoir this data is taken from was written in English with the help of an American journalist. In Alexeyeva, *The Thaw Generation: Coming of Age in the Post-Stalin Era* (memoir).

Lyudmila Krutikova-Abramova. 50s. St. Petersburg and Verkola. Soviet writer and wife of the Soviet writer Fyodor Krutikov. She wrote a book about their experiences building a home and life together in Verkola, a small settlement near Arkhangelsk in northwestern Russia. Notable both for her accommodation of her husband's patriarchal values and her occasional outspoken commitment to women's rights. In Krutikova-Abramova, *Dom v Verkole: Dokumental'naya Povest'* (memoir).

Marina Goldovskaya. 40s. Moscow and Los Angeles. Russian documentary filmmaker. Notable for her feminist and anti-Soviet stance in her work, as well as her devotion to her work and her interest in other women who were similarly professionally oriented. She is now a professor at the University of California–Los Angeles. In Goldovskaya, *Zhenshchina s kinoapparatom* (memoir).

Maria Arbatova.¹⁵ 30s. Moscow. Former dissident; now a prominent Russian feminist, one of the only members of the contemporary Russian feminist movement (see Arbatova, no date). Notable for her anti-Soviet dissent, as based on the system's mistreatment of mothers and children. In Arbatova, *Menya Zovut Zhenshchina* (short stories) and *Mne 40 let ... avtobiograficheskiy roman* (memoir/autobiographical novel).

Masha. 23. Engineer, mother, and wife. Basically adheres to both regime and social norms. In Hansson and Lidén, *Moscow Women* (interview).

¹⁵ Throughout this thesis, I have transliterated я as “ya”; however, in this case I have transliterated Мария as Maria, not Mariya, because this is how she spells it on the English-language version of her website.

Maya Plisetskaya. 50s. Moscow. Soviet/Russian ballerina; considered for a time the best ballerina in the world. Notable both for her strong commitment to her art and her flouting Soviet regulations and arguing with Fur'tseva in the service of same; and for her decision to not have children so she could focus on her career. In Plisetskaya, *Ya, Maya Plisetskaya* (memoir).

Maya Zakharovna. 75. Moscow. Russian woman. In her article, she writes about her happiness with her life as a lesbian, including her “marriage” and parenthood and, once, her friendly and accepting relationship with the husband of her female partner. In Zakharovna, “Razve lyubit' zhenshchin—eto uzhasno? Eto—prekrasno!” (personal essay).

Nadezhda Pavlovna. 48. Moscow; from Kazakhstan (but ethnically Russian). University professor, Party member, mother, wife. Devoted to her career and the goals of socialism; has some “feminist” viewpoints, though at other times adheres to social norms of femininity. In Hansson and Lidén, *Moscow Women* (interview).

Nastasya. Social scientist. In Buckley, *Soviet Social Scientists Talking* (interview).

Natal'ya P. Saratov. Mentioned that when she was in school, women did not read samizdat because they were more interested in romance. In Raleigh, *Soviet Baby Boomers* (condensed interview).

Natalya Vorontsova-Yur'yeva. Moscow. Writer of *Sneg dlya Mariny*; it is assumed that this book is neoautobiographical. In Grigor'evna and Vorontsova-Yur'yeva, “Gotovitsya k publikatsii” (interview).

Natal'ya Yanichkina. Saratov. Sees men and women as entirely equal. In Raleigh, *Soviet Baby Boomers* (condensed interview).

Natal'ya Yolshina. Saratov. Party member; now has her own TV show. Upheld traditional masculine-feminine distinctions, saying that women were more “emotional”

and men were more involved with politics. In Raleigh, *Soviet Baby Boomers* (condensed interview).

Natasha. 20s–30s. Moscow. Main character in Vorontsova-Yur'yeva's novel *Sneg dlya Mariny*. A lesbian who married a man and had children while carrying on lesbian affairs. In Vorontsova-Yur'yeva, *Sneg dlya Mariny* (fiction).

Natasha. 22. Moscow. Student of criminal law, mother, and wife. Tomboy; has some more “masculine” characteristics and many “feminist” viewpoints. In Hansson and Lidén, *Moscow Women* (interview).

Nelya. Approx. 30. Leningrad. Fictional character. Known for having “an unusual soul.” In Voznesenskaya, *The Women's Decameron* (fiction).

Nina. 25. Moscow. Data programmer and student, mother, wife. Thinks men and women should have equal “rights and obligations”; adheres to traditional feminine values, but with significant exceptions. In Hansson and Lidén, *Moscow Women* (interview).

Ol'ga. Social scientist. In Buckley, *Soviet Social Scientists Talking* (interview).

Ol'ga. 26. Moscow. Main character in Natal'ya Baranskaya's 1969 novella *Nedelya kak Nedelya*, published in *Novyi Mir*. Notable for her pride in her work as an engineer, her refusal to give up her work to stay at home with her children, her arguing with her husband about this decision, and her overall evocation of the climate of Soviet women's lives. The novella also describes Ol'ga's conversations with her female coworkers about children, the difficulties of their lives, and their duties as Soviet women. In Baranskaya, “Nedelya kak nedelya” (short story).

Ol'ga Borisovna Eikhenbaum. 60s. Philologist. Had more traditional expectations of women (particularly her daughter, the wife of a famous Soviet actor). In Eikhenbaum (diary entries).

Ol'ga Kamayurova. Saratov. Uninterested in marriage. In Raleigh, *Soviet Baby Boomers* (condensed interview).

Ol'ga Krauze. Approx. 30. Moscow. Musician, dissident, and author of the memoir *Otpetaya Zhizn'*. Notable in the context of this project for being a butch lesbian. In Krauze, *Otpetaya Zhizn'* (memoir).

Sof'ya Pol'yakova. St. Petersburg. Wrote a book about the relationship between Tsvetaeva and Parnok that was published in the US in 1983. In Franeta, "Interv'yu s Sof'yey Polyakovoy" (interview).

Sonya. 23. Moscow. Dissatisfied with her life as a stay-at-home mother and wife; wants to do something more interesting; sees a variety of problems in the Soviet Union's treatment of women. In Hansson and Lidén, *Moscow Women* (interview).

Svetlana Berzina. Age unknown; likely similar to that of Maya Zakharovna. Moscow. Writer; former partner of Maya Zakharovna. In this contemporary article, Berzina writes about their experiences with depression and their occasional attempts to present themselves as a man.¹⁶ In Berzina, "Kak ya stal nenormal'nym" (personal essay).

Tanya. 24. Moscow. Sociologist and wife. In Hansson and Lidén, *Moscow Women* (interview).

Tanya. Social scientist. In Buckley, *Soviet Social Scientists Talking* (interview).

Tat'yana Zemskova. Approx. 40s. Moscow. TV host/reporter who championed a show in which she interviewed writers on TV. Notable for her strong commitment to her work and her almost subconscious interrogation of gender norms. In *Pisatel' v Nashem Dome* (memoir).

¹⁶ Because Berzina usually uses the masculine past-tense in Russian and masculine adjective forms to refer to themselves but does not seem to present themselves as transgender per se and occasionally does use feminine past-tense endings, I have opted to use the gender-neutral "they" instead of "he" or "she."

Vera Benderova. Moscow. Soviet journalist. Notable for her strong love of her work. In Benderova, “Lyublyu i nenavizhu” (personal essay).

Vera Tkachenko. Soviet journalist. Notable for her strong love of her work, her interest in writing about women workers whom she admires, and her valuing of equality and women’s rights. In Tkachenko, “Sud’ba moya, zhurnalistika” (personal essay).

Yelena Grigor’evna. Moscow. Currently the keeper of the LGBT archive in Moscow; also a lesbian who has written about her experiences. Was opposed to the dissident movement during the Soviet Union, but is now something of a cultural dissident. My thanks to Yelena for her offer of help in this project, although I was ultimately unable to make it to her archive. In Grigor’evna, “Arkhiv: vokrug da okolo,” and Grigor’evna and Vorontsova-Yur’yeva, “Gotovitsya k publikatsii” (interviews).

Yelena Petushkova. 30s. Moscow. Olympic equestrian athlete; winner of three medals. Notable for her strong commitment to her sport, over and above her commitment to family, at least as presented in her memoir. In Petushkova, *Dve polovinki serdtsa* (interview).

Yevgeniya Kiseleva. 60. Novozvankova, Luhansk, Ukraine (but considers herself Russian). Generally traditional in terms of gender, though the fact that she wrote her life story and considered it worthy of publication—and pushed for same—may be significant. In Paperno, *Stories of the Soviet Experience* (memoir excerpts).

Yevgeniya Taratuta. Approx. 50. Moscow. Soviet/Russian writer. Notable chiefly for her description of her female friends (particularly Agniya Barto) and the admiration with which she describes her writerly pursuits. In Taratuta, “Podruga dnei moikh surovyykh” (memoir).

Yuliya Eidelman. Soviet/Russian writer and second wife of writer Nathan Eidelman. Published his diaries with her own commentary, including extensive, detailed passages

about their decades-long illicit affair. In Eidelman, *Dnevnik Natana Eidelmana* (memoir, diary entries, notes on diary entries).

Zhenya. Social scientist. In Buckley, *Soviet Social Scientists Talking* (interview).

Zoya Galitskaya. Soviet butch lesbian who wrote in *Almanach* about a day in her life; notable moments included her and her friend's attempts to thwart the Soviet system (check) and her neighbors' confusion about whether she is a man or a woman. In Galitskaya, "A day in the life" (personal essay).