

# OF MAT AND MEN: TABOO WORDS AND THE LANGUAGE OF RUSSIAN FEMALE PUNKS

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Through ethnographic data and discourse analysis, this article exposes the presence of sexist practices within an ostensibly egalitarian Russian punk scene in Saint Petersburg. Specifically, this article examines how female punks use *mat* (swear words like “fuck,” “shit,” “whore,” and “cunt”) to transgress hegemonic notions of femininity, while at the same time performing a masculine ritual that Russian punks highly value as subcultural capital. This article examines linguistic practice surrounding *mat* and demonstrates that *mat* is not “male” but instead performs stances of authority and masculinity, which are in turn associated with gender. The article’s close examination of linguistic practice among female punks helps elucidate some of the ways that punk women attempt to claim authority within a scene that otherwise physically and socially marginalizes them. By drawing on the ethnomethodological theories of indexicality and stance, the analysis shows how micro instances of *mat* simultaneously interact with—and draw upon—macro conceptions of the traditional gender order. Because mainstream gender norms strongly proscribe women’s use of *mat*, punk women can effectively exploit this cultural proscription to create distance from mainstream conceptions of femininity while simultaneously exploiting their subversion of the traditional gender order to accrue subcultural capital. Rather than separating linguistic practice from macro discourses on gender, this article traces how macro conceptions of the gender order help structure—and are structured by—talk in interaction. As such, this article provides critical insight into how micro instances of *mat* interact with macro conceptions of the gender order to create an alternative punk femininity.

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My last weekend in the field conducting research on punk culture in Russia also marked my debut Russian powerlifting competition for the DIY (do-it-yourself) gym Vegeterianskaia Sila (Vegetarian Power). Vlad, the founder and trainer for the gym, raised funds through punk-rock concerts and conceived the gym for *svoi* (one’s own). Men and women in the punk scene regularly frequented the gym and followed power-

lifting regimens that Vlad personally devised. The gym's basement location, open layout, and gray cement walls fostered a Spartan approach to powerlifting. When you worked out at Vegeterianskaia Sila you focused on the exercises rather than your surroundings. Punk rock funded the gym and allowed Vlad to buy bench presses, squat racks, and dumbbells—everything we needed to properly train for powerlifting competitions.

The Russian Powerlifting Federation selected Kronshtadt, a small municipal island about 45 minutes seaward from Saint Petersburg in the Gulf of Finland, to hold the competition. On the way there I shared a *marshrutka* (a shared taxi) with Zina, Dinara, and Irina. All three regularly—and very successfully—competed for Vegeterianskaia Sila over the past few years. We checked into our guesthouse around six in the evening but still had a couple of hours to wait until the boys—Tolia, Sasha, and Vlad—would arrive. Having a moment, we strolled around the provincial city. During our stroll my eyes met with two men in their early 20s approaching us on the sidewalk. They looked us over, paying special attention to Zina's bleached blonde hair. One of them muttered, "*Ty zachem krasila volosy?!"* (Why did you color your hair). This same mutterer leaned his shoulder downward, collided with Zina, and knocked her off her stride. I stood there processing what to do, but Zina, in stark contrast to my indecision, swung around and yelled at them, "*Cho!?! Pizdy poluchish!'"*

**Example 1: You're gonna get fucked up!**

**M:** *Ty zachem krasila volosy?*

Why'd you dye your hair?

**Z:** *Cho!?! Pizdy poluchish!'*

What'd you say!? I'm gonna fuck you up!

Russians largely eschew a literal interpretation of the expression *pizdy poluchish'* (you'll receive some cunt). They instead view the expression *pizdy poluchish'* largely as a stance of aggression and imminent physical threat. However, the fact that Zina opted for *pizda* (cunt) rather than *khui* (cock) (another canonical member of the category *mat*, swear words) hints at her mobilization of femininity to convey aggression and construct her own subjectivity. The makeup of precisely what "counts" as a swear word in any language often shifts in conjunction with changing understandings of taboo subjects within a given culture (for a discussion of the shifting nature of curse words in English see Bryson 1990; Pinker 2007, 2008). For the purposes of this article I follow the philologist Aleksei Plutser-Sarno's model and define *mat* as those words derived from these four roots: *eb+* "fuck", *khui+* "cock," *pizd+* "cunt," and *bliad'+* "whore" (see, for example, Plutser-Sarno, Dulichenko, and Rudnev 2001).

This fieldwork moment where Zina used *mat* to perform aggressive masculinity captures punk gender norms—but it hardly speaks for the majority of sociolinguistic situations in Russia. In mainstream cultural milieus women's use of *mat* is more limited. My roughly two years in the field spanned two distinct cultural landscapes. During the day I worked as an editor and translator for the Saint Petersburg football

club Zenit. My days shifted from office work in the towering business center that housed Zenit's many employees to my fieldwork in the dingy basements and communal flats of punks. In addition to the stark physical difference between these two worlds, I could also keenly feel the disparity between them through their highly differentiated *mat* usage. In sharp relief to Zina's unfettered and brazen use of *mat*, women in the cubicle culture of Zenit rarely ever used *mat*. The sparing instances when women did use *mat* stood in contrast to most workdays with Zenit. I discuss one such moment below.

In 2015 Zenit celebrated its 90th anniversary. To mark the occasion, the club hosted various events. While one week saw a meet and greet with the players, the next week might bring the opening of an official Zenit museum, and the next might feature one of the players surprising kids at school. Ania often spearheaded the logistical arrangements for these outreach events. At the end of a particularly trying day, she shot up from her desk at her cubicle and hurriedly walked the 15 feet from her cubicle to ours. She started telling me and my male colleagues—Egor, Sania, and Ivan—about some of the frustrating circumstances she was dealing with that day but hesitated to use *mat* outright. She leaned in towards us, dropped her voice to a whisper, and said:

**Example 2: Forgive me guys**

**A:** *Prostitie menia rebiata*

Forgive me guys

*No eto prosto pizdets seichas.*

But it's just a shit show right now.

Because we knew exactly the kinds of hassles she had to manage, we all knowingly smiled with her. After politely chatting for a moment longer, Ania walked the 15 feet back to her cubicle, and we all immersed ourselves back in our tasks for the day.

What is striking about this moment is not that she cursed, but *how* she cursed. Ania used the turn preface, "forgive me guys," to alert us that she was about to say something that would merit forgiveness. Although Ania was only addressing us, she still had to accommodate our other coworkers' expectations of her—namely, that as a woman she should not use *mat*. Her turn preface keys a brief interactional realignment that momentarily transgresses gendered norms of linguistic practice. Unlike Ania, my male colleagues gleefully cursed on business calls or in conversations with colleagues throughout the workday.

These two examples illustrate the presence of multiple femininities within Russian culture. When female punks use *mat* to take an aggressive interactional stance and indirectly index masculinity, they destabilize gender norms. Mainstream society prescribes that if women use *mat* at all, they should do so in a whisper. Conversely, punk women show no hesitation to use *mat* and make no apologies for its use. Yet, while the free use of *mat* in punk culture may give the impression that punk promotes more egalitarian values, the mere fact that women in punk use *mat* more brazenly tells us nothing about the underlying conditions within the culture that might foster

this kind of linguistic practice. Thus, at the same time as we consider the immediate social and discursive context of Zina's utterance, we must also situate it within the cultural context of a hypermasculine Russian punk culture. We must explore not only the social implications of using *mat*, but also the social implications of Zina uttering *mat* within a punk context. Namely, we must investigate whether punk actually supports more egalitarian values and allows women to use *mat* more frequently or whether punk culture so highly values performances of masculinity that women use *mat* to align with a punk community that often bars them from important subcultural performances.

This article draws on sociolinguistic interviews, naturally occurring talk-in-interaction, and metapragmatic commentary on *mat* to answer this question. This methodological approach facilitates a detailed exposition of explicit and implicit gender norms of punk culture and punk linguistic practice. The context of Russian punk culture forces us to understand utterances as not only the display of an aggressive interpersonal stance but the verbal manifestation of an aggressive interpersonal stance *within* the cultural frame of a masculine culture where *mat* and displays of aggression both carry covert prestige.

## TRANSLATING AND TRANSLITERATING MAT

Presenting Russian conversational data in English poses at least two difficulties from the outset. Rendering Russian to English, for speakers unfamiliar with Cyrillic requires we first transliterate it using Roman characters. While this may seem straightforward, scholars themselves have yet to reach a common agreement on how best to approach this issue.<sup>1</sup> I use a modified template from the Library of Congress (LOC) for transliterating Russian in this article.

Moreover, any act of translation is necessarily an act of analysis (Schegloff 2000), and any act of transcription is necessarily an act of interpretation (Bucholtz 2000). Mary Bucholtz argues that we, as researchers, "do not merely reproduce the spoken word in written form, but produce new texts that bear the mark of our authorship" (2000:1454). Subsequently, she advocates for "reflexive discourse analysis," which requires the ethnographer or discourse analyst to recognize their role in the creation of the text. Throughout this article, I try to err on the side of faithfulness to the original Russian. As necessary, I highlight additional translations in footnotes. If some translations ring slightly odd to the native English speaker, it is due either to any inherent shortcomings in my translation or to my attempt to convey some Russian "feel" into the English phrasing.

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<sup>1</sup> There are no fewer than three widely used systems to transliterate Russian to English: the Library of Congress system, the Institute for Scientific Information system, and Scientific Transliteration. Each of these developed to serve the needs of people working in separate scholarly traditions. Libraries at universities and in government institutions use the Library of Congress system, scholars working within cultural studies and literature tend to use the Institute for Scientific Information system, and linguists tend to use the Scientific Transliteration system.

## PUSSY RIOT'S PLACE IN PUNK

Pussy Riot is undoubtedly the best-known Russian punk group in the world. Their swift rise to prominence after their infamous “Punk Prayer” resulted in a global media firestorm and ushered the word “pussy” into mainstream media coverage well before “pussy hats” brought the second wave of pussy protests to the fore.<sup>2</sup> Around the same time as Pussy Riot came to media prominence, intellectual inquiry into Russian punk rock began to make a surge of its own. Given the immense media attention Pussy Riot generated around this time, it would seem only logical that Pussy Riot’s presence should loom just as large in scholarly works. Yet, in the first book devoted to Russian punk the authors Ivan Gololobov, Hilary Pilkington, and Yngvar Steinholt (2014) reference Pussy Riot a paltry three times on pages 8, 46, and 197. Surely these authors must have bogged themselves down in depths of academic esotericism to have made such an egregious oversight? Hardly. Their detailed ethnographic approach captures punks as they live and narrate their lives and practices in the punk scene. Subsequently, the absence of Pussy Riot’s prominence within the pages of their book reveals the absence of Pussy Riot’s relevance for punks in the Russian scene. Steinholt (2013) rightly highlights the sentiment shared by many of my informants in Saint Petersburg: Pussy Riot emerged not from the punk scene but from arts and cultural activism, and they have little overlap with punk.<sup>3</sup> Valerie Sperling (2014, 2015) interviews Russian feminists who question Pussy Riot’s status as feminists because Pussy Riot’s misogynistic lyrics draw on violent discourses that Russian feminists eschew. During my time in the field in 2014–2015, punks prefaced any discussion of Pussy Riot with a groan, and they spoke about Pussy Riot only to mention the times European punks told them, “Oh Russian punk, Pussy Riot rules!”

All of this compelled me to examine Pussy Riot played in the scene and what role they play for researchers. For the punks I interviewed, Pussy Riot appropriated a punk identity that they themselves felt they embodied. One my informants told me that when she heard about Pussy Riot she thought, “Wait, how can they be punks? They’re not punks, I’m a punk”; while another said, “Pussy Riot are punks? What are you talking about? Have you ever even listened to their music?” Yet, both these informants also acknowledged solidarity with Pussy Riot after three of the group’s members were arrested and sentenced to prison. Some in the scene even held fundraising concerts for Pussy Riot. They might not share cultural origins or musical production with Pussy Riot, but they did have a shared enemy—Vladimir Putin. The true tipping point that marked a fundamental difference, my informants told me, came after Pussy Riot *pokinuli* (abandoned) Russia. What is more, after they “abandoned” Russia they then

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pussyhatproject.com/>.

<sup>3</sup> Yngvar Steinholt (2013) presents an excellent overview of the origins of Pussy Riot from their start in the art collective Voina through “Punk’s Prayer,” while also highlighting some responses (or lack thereof) from the punk scene.

started appearing with celebrities like Madonna<sup>4</sup>—even acting in the Netflix show *House of Cards*.

Yet, given that this article concerns women's use of *mat* in the punk scene, it is worth pausing to briefly contextualize Pussy Riot's rather provocative name. The name Pussy Riot deliberately calls back to an earlier punk movement, riot grrrl, which also weaponized the feminine with such band names as Bikini Kill, CWA (Cunts with Attitude), Free Kitten, and Pussycat Trash. Moreover, Pussy Riot claims its aggressive feminine space with English rather than Russian and any variation of its canonical *mat* member, *pizd+* (cunt). Their decision to use English indexes its Western heritage but also makes it more palatable and less incendiary to a Russian audience less familiar with the term. Thus, although Pussy Riot's name and initial protests recall the punk "ethos," punk informants routinely excluded them from punk subculture because of their involvement with celebrities and big budget television. Given this, they claimed, Pussy Riot were not practicing punk. Pussy Riot brings punk into focus at the same time as they also bring the need to focus on practices and everyday lives as we endeavor to understand the purview of punk. Gololobov et al.'s (2014) work helps refocus the perspective from media sensation to everyday lives and practices. This article—and its investigation into how female punks use *mat* to perform an aggressive masculinity—attempts to build on their research by specifically attending to the structural effects of gender within the Saint Petersburg punk scene.

## PATRIARCHY AND PLACE IN PUNK

From its inception, punk has focused its rebellious proclivities against the "cock rock" (Frith 1981) of the 1970s, choosing to parody rather than embrace female objectification. Female singers, like Poly Styrene of X-Ray Spex, donned Dayglo outfits, wore braces, and created brightly colored plastic wardrobes that obfuscated the female form. Others, like Ari Up of the Slits, wore underwear on top of their outfits to manipulate female objectification. Yet, as Lauraine Leblanc (1999) notes, punk still has roots in the machismo and masculinism of garage rock. By the 1980s the San Francisco hardcore scene took root and started to edge women out of groups and punk audiences (Stark 1992). Indeed, by 1985 prominent punk zines (self-published magazines) declared "punks are not girls" (Laing 1985:41). Scholarship (with the notable exception of Leblanc's 1999 study) consistently focused on the male perspective within punk (Haenfler 2006; Penner 2011; Faulk and Harrison 2014).

In the Russian context, Pilkington's (2014) study of punks in Vorkuta highlights the difficulties that women face when trying to assert any kind of authoritative position in the hypermasculine Vorkuta punk scene. Interestingly, though *mat* was not her focus, Pilkington does briefly mention the use of *mat* among punks. Discussing the exclusion of female punks from music venues, the study notes that the club "was

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<sup>4</sup> Eliana Dockterman, "Pussy Riot Stole the Show From Madonna: The Fray and Blondie Last Night at Barclays," *Time*, February 6, 2014 (<http://time.com/4954/pussy-riot-and-madonna-perform-at-brooklyn-amnesty-international-concert/>).

constructed as a male space through stage performances, which were interspersed with sexist jokes and embellished obscenities [*mat*] employing a sexual organ-explicit terminology" (Pilkington 2014:161). The authors' reference to *mat* serves to underscore the status of the space as "male" and seems to place *mat* within the domain of "the male." In this article I delve into linguistic practice surrounding *mat* and argue that *mat* is not "male" but rather associated with stances of authority and masculinity. An examination of linguistic practice among female punks helps elucidate some of the ways that punk women attempt to claim authority within a scene that otherwise often physically and socially marginalizes them. Additionally, when we understand *mat* as part of the active performance of masculinity rather than with the static gender identity of "male," we can reach a better understanding of how women in the scene use *mat* to incorporate masculine features and create an alternative punk femininity. In the following section, I use data from interviews to demonstrate the importance of gender dynamics within the Russian punk scene. I then show how the prestige of masculine punk performance structures norms of interaction.

Punks anticipate the festival United Help Fest<sup>5</sup> more than nearly any other planned event of the year. In 2015, for the sixth annual festival roughly 30 groups performed, although only three featured female performers (including my own band). The conspicuous lack of women on stage at this festival led to social commentaries from women (in contrast to the men, who did not remark on this). One such example comes from my interview with Mariia:

There was a really active section of women, who really wanted to play music. But the conversation never went any further. Why? Because well I remember that we were discussing it and damn, *devushki* (ladies) our music probably won't be interesting to anyone, seriously, because *chuvaki* (dudes) love hardcore and something stronger and we would probably sing about love and about problems hahaha, and I'm just afraid that it wouldn't find support and would probably die out pretty quickly.

Mariia's comments expose the gender norms in the scene. Moreover, they also demonstrate that both men and women assign prestige to aggressive, masculine performances of punk rock. Mariia acknowledges that girls do have physical access to the stage to make and perform music. Yet, they do not have the right to authentically express themselves because "the guys love hardcore" and not what they would play. In this way, Mariia's narrative positions men as the arbiters of acceptability in punk, saying that their music will fail because "*chuvaki* (dudes) love hardcore and something stronger." Women's peripheral role in the scene and their inability to influence preferred tastes and values within punk result in a lack of influence on punk musical discourse.

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<sup>5</sup> The festival's title is in English rather than Russian. When punks refer to it, even those who don't speak English, they treat it as a borrowing rather than a calque.



I captured this sentiment on tape during a spontaneous conversation between me, Lena, and Aleksei. This recording elucidates the everyday lived experience of women in the scene. A group of us had gone out camping, and three of us sat around the campfire listening to a song whose lyrics consisted of a romantic narrative. Aleksei, never one to be silent, offered his thoughts on the lyrics.

**A:** Fuck. What'd he say—would be better to lie than talk about love. What's there to sing about with love? *Pizdets bliad* (it's fucking terrible). Even right now when they're singing about love, it's been sung about so many times, I have no idea.

**MF:** You don't like it when people sing about love?

**A:** Well like love is just a done to death theme. And it's becoming, I don't know.

**MF:** Well what about when, well I understand you in terms of uh but actually I like it when people are just singing about relationships on the whole, it doesn't matter if it's about a romantic relationship, just the relationship between people.

**A:** Well you can imply what love is. It's different feelings, but precisely what it is nobody knows and I don't get it. What's he singing about? It's just not that simple.

**L:** He's not singing love love love.

**A:** What's he singing about then?

**L:** Well like he's singing about a girl.

**A:** Well that's it? What the hell's there to sing about with that?

This excerpt shows how punks discursively negotiate the kinds of voices permissible within the scene. During my time in the field I wrote and recorded an EP with Lena.<sup>6</sup> She writes and plays music that resonates with her, and lyrics did occasionally concern love and the hazards of longing for a romantic connection. Yet, when Aleksei listens to music that contains similarly romantic narratives, he disputes its relevance and place within punk rock. For him love represents a “done to death theme,” and really, he says, “what's there to sing about with that?” Lena insists it is about more than just vague declarations of love, it is about the context and the story of people finding love. But for Aleksei these topics are anathema to his concept of punk culture. He dismisses Lena's reframing of the lyrical content, saying, “Well that's everything?,” and denies lyrical narratives of love and romance a place in the scene.

When I interviewed Valia, another punk in her 20s, she also spoke to women's lack of ability to express themselves in the scene, adding that women can indeed perform the aggressive masculinity but only if and when they have the cultural sanction to do so:

Punk in general, it's really aggressive and the aggression it's like, it's masculine. It's a more masculine sphere and that's why like female groups aren't taken seri-

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<sup>6</sup> EP stands for “extended play.” EPs generally consist of 3–5 songs and are so called because they are longer than a single and shorter than an LP (long-play).



ously because it seems like female groups maybe can't express that kind of aggression but they really can also be this aggressive and can be really cool.... There's a kind aggressiveness and expressiveness in punk that on the whole in musical groups it's believed that it isn't a feminine sphere.

Valia's comments highlight the essentialist gender division within punk practice. Punk culture prides itself on the prevalence of slogans like *my vse ravny* (we're all equal), yet their practice contradicts this ostensible egalitarianism. Valia describes the scene as masculine and says that female groups are not taken seriously. This reveals the common assumption that because they are female, they can only perform in a feminine and not masculine way. At the same time, she acknowledges the tacit belief in biological determinism within punk culture, although she herself rejects it. Instead, she asserts that women can perform the aggressiveness that men so value in the scene.

Through the course of transcribing the data for this project I occasionally had to request native Russian judgments of my transcriptions. One female colleague of mine, even after I already warned her about the preponderance of *mat*, told me, "My god, why do women use so much *mat*?" To begin to answer that question we have to understand the significant subcultural capital *mat* carries, as well as women's subordinate position in the scene. In the next section I lay out the theoretical approaches that expose underlying social mechanisms that help explain the prevalence of *mat* among female punks. The theory of indexicality elucidates the sociolinguistic processes that link masculinity and *mat*. Stance, the positions we take up in interactions, provides the interactional framework to demonstrate how gender performances unfold through conversational turns. The concepts of indexicality and stance allow us to accomplish two goals. On the one hand, they help us better understand the underlying social mechanisms that generate the gendered meaning of *mat*. On the other, these theoretical tools facilitate a detailed analysis of how speakers deploy *mat*'s performative potential to voice masculinity and claim a position within the hypermasculine space of Russian punk rock.

## THE "MEANING" OF *MAT*

Vadim Mikhailin argues that "[*m*]*at* is a prerogative of the masculine Russian (and Russian speaking) population" (2000:72). The Soviet philologist Boris Uspensky describes *mat* in similarly gendered terms when he writes, "women in particular are not allowed to curse: cursing from the lips of women is thought of just like a sin, from which the land suffers" (1997:143). Google searches of the phrases "*mat i devushki*" (*mat* and women) and "*devushki mogut materit'sia?*" (can women curse?) yield a plethora of results (623,000 and 1,700,000, respectively) and no less commentary. Users of Russian websites consistently spew vitriol against women who curse and insist that cursing is a masculine domain. Pikabu, an online portal (very similar to the American website Reddit), contains posts like "*mysli o materiashchikhsia devushkakh*" (thoughts about cursing girls). The guiding question for that post reads:

Girls who believe that they can curse and think that this is normal—I don't understand you. You can't see yourself from the outside and don't know how disgusting it is to hear uncensored vulgar language from a girl, especially if it's every other word.... Really, what would it be like if Vasia the bald plumber, with a week's worth of stubble, were to put on a dress, heels, and lipstick, how is that going to look? Are you going to like that look? ... *Mat—eto muzhko* (*mat* is masculine).<sup>7</sup>

This post is particularly revealing because at the same time the author equates *mat* with men (i.e., Vasia the plumber), the author also conflates the performance of masculinity with one's gender identity. If we delve just a bit deeper than examining the subreddits of the world and stride towards actual usage, we see that simply equating *mat* with an imaginary Vasia the plumber oversimplifies and conflates gender performance with gender identity. We can perhaps understand this scholarly and folk commentary if we frame it in the context of the return to the traditional gender order under President Putin (Sperling 2015). This cultural frame dictates that women must necessarily act feminine and men necessarily act masculine and renders it a bit more difficult to divorce gender performance from gender identity. Yet, if we step outside this dominant cultural frame and instead analyze gender performance within a cultural context that does not so highly privilege traditional gender norms, we see that *mat* usage tells us little if anything about gender identity (male or female) and more about discrete interactional stances (aggressive and authoritative). Instead of viewing *mat* strictly as a conduit for "men's talk" (Mikhailin 2000), we should understand *mat* as part and parcel of an aggressive punk linguistic style. This article's close analysis of talk-in-interaction reveals that speakers use *mat* to directly index authoritative interactional stances, which carry indirect indexical ties to masculinity.

Elinor Ochs's (1992) work first articulated the need to separate indexicality into direct and indirect indexicality. She observed an intermediate level of indexical meaning in much of the literature on indexicality. For example, Ochs argued that Japanese sentence-final particles such as *zo*, *ze*, and *wa* index affective dispositions like feelings, moods, and attitudes (see also Clancy 1986). According to Ochs's conception of indexicality, these particles directly index affective dispositions (such as softness or hesitancy) while also indirectly indexing gender. Ochs defines *direct* indexicality as "an unmediated relation between one or more linguistic forms and some contextual dimension," and *indirect* indexicality arises when "the feature of the communicative event directly indexed is conventionally linked to and helps to constitute some second feature of the communicative context" (1992:295). That is, the immediate communicative context directly indexes affective dispositions like softness or hesitancy. Speakers then link these affective dispositions to a masculine or feminine gender performance. Take for instance my informant's use of *mat* in this assertion:

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<sup>7</sup> "Mysli o materiashchikhsia devushkakh," Pikabu, n.d. ([http://pikabu.ru/story/myisli\\_o\\_materyashchikhsya\\_devushkakh\\_1585126](http://pikabu.ru/story/myisli_o_materyashchikhsya_devushkakh_1585126)).

**Example 3**

*U menia netu bliad' prozhivaniia v Pitere.*

I don't have a fucking permit to stay in St. Pete.

Within the immediate communicative context *bliad'* directly indexes a harsh affective disposition, while the larger sociohistorical context links this harsh affective disposition to masculinity.

Scott Kiesling (2005, 2006) builds on Ochs's work and argues for a conception of these affective dispositions as interactional stances. Stances, according to John Du Bois, are a public act "through which social actors simultaneously evaluate objects, position subjects (themselves and others), and align with other subjects" (2007:141). Within this interactional framework of stancetaking, speakers take specific stances that then become associated with masculinity and femininity. Stance, then, emerges as an inherent property of interaction and unfolds across conversational turns. Owing to its iterative nature, an investigation into speaker stances necessitates an empirical approach that examines stances as they develop across an interaction. Scholars working on stance, such as Alexandra Jaffe (2009), Du Bois (2007), and Kiesling (2005, 2006), distinguish between two types of stances. Affective stances represent emotional states of the speaker, whereas epistemic stances convey speakers' degree of certainty about their propositions. Speakers taking affective stances may index a culturally specific set of norms, thereby positioning themselves and others within the bounds of a given social group. Epistemic stances create and sustain cultural norms as they embed the right to know within socially sanctioned regimes of knowledge.

In short, stances *evaluate*. They evaluate previous utterances; they evaluate discursive figures; they evaluate the prices of certain products. As such, stances help create certain moral orders. Because stances are fundamentally evaluative in nature, they allow speakers to take positions not only *vis-à-vis* their interlocutors but also relative to discursive objects such as the ideology of capitalism and even relative to immediately prior stances. As such, any given stance serves as the potential next object of evaluation for subsequent stances. Speakers can show affiliation or disaffiliation when they evaluate prior stances. Moreover, because stances unfold across linguistic turns, they are dialogic and must always be situated within their discourse context.

Subsequently, when we analyze the stance speakers take to themselves, others, discursive objects, and previous stances, we achieve a better understanding not only of the existence of key punk ideologies but also of how punks create and sustain these ideologies from the ground up. In this article I demonstrate how women use *mat* to create a stance of authoritative affiliation by aligning with core ideologies in the Russian punk scene like anticapitalism and mutual support. While the hypermasculine punk community marginalizes women from key performance spaces, stances of affiliation allow women the space to claim an important position and higher status in the punk community—in spite of their lower degree of access to positions of social prominence. Some of Pilkington's punk informants even referred to women in the scene as *tumbochki* (bedside tables), which characterized women as ineffectual

background props (2014:158). Yet, if we examine punk women's linguistic practice, we see that in spite of male punks' disparaging attitudes towards women, they actively participate in shaping punk norms.

### **MAT IN INTERACTION**

The following three excerpts show how women utilize *mat* to discursively create and sustain core punk ideologies, such as anticapitalism, and position themselves as arbiters of who has the right to call themselves punks. Seen in this way, *mat* does not directly index masculinity, instead *mat* directly indexes particular stances (such as authoritative knowledge) and these stances are then associated with masculinity. Subsequently, female punks' use of *mat* accrues subcultural capital because women's use of the masculine code of *mat* subverts the dominant, neotraditional gender order while also aligning with the masculinist culture of the Russian punk scene. This brings the added benefit of allowing women to claim positions of subcultural authority otherwise inaccessible to them.

As noted earlier, female punks' use of *mat* presents a stark contrast to how women in the office use (or more often abstain from) *mat*. Women in my punk community had no hesitation about using *mat*. Take for example this excerpt that captures me, Feliks, Aleksei, and Lena in the midst of a trek out to the Russian wilderness. Feliks, Aleksei, Lena, and I left the train station and walked for about 30 minutes toward our camping site when we happened upon wild strawberries. The additional heft of our backpacks, stuffed full with our camping supplies, meant we happily took any excuse to stop—if only even for a moment. The discovery of wild strawberries, coupled with respite from the overbearing summer heat, provided us with a most welcome break. We stopped, took a closer look, and, much to our excitement, saw even more wild berries than we had anticipated.

#### **Example 4: A shit-ton**

1. **A:** *Vidish' skol'ko zemlianiiki kstati*

See how many wild strawberries there are by the way

2. *Ochen' mnogo*

A lot

[We stop walking, move a couple of bushes out of the way and take a closer look.]

3. **L:** *Oooo*

4. **A:** *Ooochen' mnogo bliad'*

A fucking looooot

5. **L:** *Ebat'!!*

Fuck!!

6. *Do khuia*<sup>8</sup>

A shit-ton

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<sup>8</sup> *Do khuia* translates literally as "up to cock."

7. **A:** *Ooo nishtiak!*<sup>9</sup>  
Ooo sweet!
8. *Nishtiaki poedim*  
We'll snack on some goodies

In the span of 15 seconds Lena lets loose more *mat* than I heard in the span of 12 months from all of my female colleagues at Zenit—and this simply to express surprise about the abundance of wild strawberries. Lena's consistent use of *mat* while gathering strawberries transforms a passive, feminine activity (picking strawberries) into an active performance of masculinity. Indeed, strawberries abounded to such an extent that Lena remarked that she is “up to [the] cock” in strawberries. While strawberries themselves do not carry social gender, Lena's description of the strawberries as “up to cock” does. Moreover, Lena's use of *mat* comes on the heels of Aleksei's in line 4 and represents an uptake of Aleksei's use of *mat*, which he deployed to strengthen his stance about the abundance of strawberries. In a single use of *mat*, Lena accomplishes three simultaneous social actions: (1) she uses *mat* to create an authoritative interactional stance that aligns with Aleksei's, (2) creates solidarity between herself and Aleksei by projecting the use of a shared code, and (3) thereby signals shared affiliation within the punk community. All this is accomplished through a seemingly trivial moment of picking wild strawberries in the Russian wilderness.

In the excerpt below Aleksei and Lena use *mat* to negatively evaluate mainstream values and create an interactional stance that aligns with punk anticapitalist values. The excerpt comes from a conversation between me, Lena, and Aleksei in the pristine Russian forests between Russia and Finland.

**Example 5: “Change all of your goals”**

1. **A:** *Nu ia ne znaiu nu kak eto nazvat' vziat' ili smenit'*  
Well I don't even know how to say it, to take or to change
2. *Tipa*  
Like
3. *Svoi obraz zhizni svoiu napravlennost' kak by*  
Like your way of life like your direction
4. *Vse tseli pomeniat' nu vot*  
Change all of your goals
5. *Prosto chtoby*  
Well just so that
6. *Tebe zhilos' komfortno*  
You lived comfortably

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<sup>9</sup> *Nishtiak* is a part of a general youth slang that means “something very good.” Although there are no formal, scholastic investigations into the origins of this word, folk etymologies seem to agree that it is a reduced and reinterpreted form of *nichego*, “nothing.” See, for example, discussion site *Russkii iazyk* (<http://bit.ly/2xjE9vk>) and Russian Wiktionary (<http://bit.ly/2xc0IkK>).

7. *Da na khui*  
Yeah fuck that
8. **L:** *Eto da bliad'*  
Fuck yeah
9. *V chem smysle vaashche*  
What the fuck is the point of that at all

In this excerpt, *mat* functions as an interactional tool that Lena and Aleksei deploy to emphasize their dismissive stance towards mainstream society values. In lines 1–6, Aleksei first creates the discursive figure of those who change their lives and goals for the merely materialistic reason of simply living more comfortably (elsewhere in the data he explicitly refers to this type of discursive figure as *obyvateli*, “the philistines”). After creating this discursive figure, in line 7 Aleksei switches from creating the discursive figure to evaluating it. Aleksei’s “*da*” disaligns with the *obyvateli* and aligns with the negative stance he forcefully creates through *mat* “*na khui*” (fuck that). *Mat* not only creates this stance but also serves to emphasize the extent to which he disagrees with the position of the *obyvateli* who alter their lives and goals for materialistic reasons.

Lena uses *mat* to accomplish two interactional goals. Firstly, Lena’s use of *mat* in line 8 effectively demonstrates her negative evaluation of *obyvateli*. Secondly, her use of *mat* in line 8 echoes Aleksei both in form (*da + mat*) and function. She then elaborates on her stance of alignment in line 9 by further questioning the life trajectory of the *obyvateli* when she adds: “What the fuck is the point of that at all.” Through the use of *mat* and the accompanying interactional stances, Lena and Aleksei discursively create and sustain punk anticapitalist ideology. Lena and Aleksei use interactional stances to claim a certain right to know, a certain epistemic authority that positions them as arbiters of the punk moral order. *Mat* further entrenches their position and textures their identity as punks because of its ability to carry subcultural capital.

Continuing on the theme of stance used to establish punk moral order, this next excerpt shows how Lena deploys *mat* to monitor the boundaries of membership within punk culture. Here again we see the importance punks place on financial considerations as they define who is and who is not a punk. This next example focuses on Lena as she narrates her trip to a DIY punk liquor store. The micro analysis of the situated use of *mat* demonstrates that speakers do not use *mat* to directly index masculinity. Instead, speakers use *mat* to directly index particular interactional stances of authority. Speakers and interlocutors then associate these stances of authority with masculinity.

**Example 6: First of all**

1. *I ona koroche*  
So anyway she
2. *Vo-pervykh dlia pankov*  
First of all for punks

3. *Vo-vtorykh my s nei znakomy normal'no*  
Second of all we know each other pretty decently
4. *Ja uzhe raz byl<sup>10</sup> barmen i vse takoe*  
I was already a bartender and all that
5. *Tri piat'sot eto ebat'*  
Three [thousand] five hundred is fucking bullshit
6. *Nu bliad'*  
Well fuck
7. *Tipa ia schitaiu chto eto do khuia*  
Well fuck like I think that it's just too fucking much

Punks routinely balance the fact of their participation in markets with the fact of their participation in punk anticapitalist culture. Unless punk enterprises take place in a squat (and Saint Petersburg police and administration always saw to it that they did not), punk enterprises function within a capitalist market and under the auspices of a landlord. Yet, many of the punks in the scene worked very low-paying jobs or relied upon other punks to help them live. Owing to this tension, punks paid close attention to pricing. The price of these DIY punk goods had to be enough to support the enterprise, yet also low enough to be affordable to punks without much capital. This excerpt highlights this difficult balance and demonstrates that punks perceive fair pricing as a moral imperative.

Lena's statement in line 3 reframes the discussion of the price of goods from one of economic consideration and into one of social and moral consideration. Lena establishes the social relationship between herself and the bartender so as to assert that they *should* share the same moral code about pricing—that she set prices accessible to punks with little financial capital. Lena's next utterance in line 4 reinforces the social relationship and emphasizes their ties not only as punks in the scene but as punks who have even worked together and have a personal connection above and beyond simply existing in the same scene. By framing their relationship in this way before even mentioning the price, Lena publicly displays her expectations for her interlocutors (me and Aleksei). This social recasting also foreshadows the failure of the bartender to meet both her personal expectations and the moral underpinnings of punk more generally. Thus, these evaluative stances help Lena claim authoritative knowledge on the bounds of punk culture by positioning her and the bartender both firmly within punk.

Lena's claiming of authoritative knowledge in lines 1–4 provides additional force to the affective stances she takes in lines 5 and 6. When Lena evaluates the price of the alcohol (3,500 rubles) as “*ebat'*” (fucking bullshit), the evaluation comes from the mouth of one with insider knowledge and one with the authority to establish the proper moral boundaries of punk pricing. Moreover, Lena does not simply

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<sup>10</sup> While it is grammatically “correct” for the verb to agree with the subject in gender and number in the past tense, Lena likely mistakenly used the masculine form of the copula owing both to the topical role of “barmen” and the copula's syntactic placement just prior to the focus of the utterance.



evaluate the price as expensive or cheap, she uses *mat* and at that, a verb rather than a noun. *Ebat'* in this context escapes easy translation because the direct English equivalent "to fuck" cannot serve as a term of evaluation. Instead, a looser translation like "fucked up" better captures the interactional force of the utterance. Yet, of the four canonical members of *mat* (*pizda* [cunt], *khui* [cock], *bliad'* [whore], and *ebat'* [to fuck]) she used the only member that is a transitive verb and can take an object. In this sense, Lena seems to imply to her interlocutors that by charging an unreasonable amount to her she not only breaks the codes of punk culture, she quite figuratively "fucks them over" with the prices.

Notably, Lena does not use *mat* to directly index masculinity but to directly index particular stances about the moral boundaries of pricing in punk culture. The fact that she uses *mat* to take some of these authoritative stances (*eto ebat'* [that's fucked] and *do khuia* [up to cock]) effectively underscores her authority on the matter in ways that using euphemisms or other expressions such as *eto ne spravedlivo* (that's unfair) or *eto erunda* (that's nonsense) simply cannot portray. Thus, the use of *mat* in interaction does less to directly establish a gendered identity and more to establish a particular interactional stance of authority.

In the previous example we saw how Lena used *mat* to negatively evaluate the prices of a punk DIY endeavor and in so doing discursively manage the boundaries of punk culture. In this example we again see Lena use *mat* to manage the boundaries of punk culture. However, rather than mobilizing *mat* for a negative evaluation, she does so to extoll the positive features of punk.

**Example 7: "Didn't do shit"**

1. **L:** *Koroche u menia byli vremena*  
In short I had some times
2. *Kogda tipa u menia pizdets tam bliad'*  
When like everything went to fucking shit around me
3. *Chto-to ochen' zhestko pritvorilos' v bashke*  
Something really shitty was going on in my head
4. *I tipa sidela dva mesiatsa doma*  
And I sat at home for two months
5. *Nikhuia ne rabotala*  
Didn't do jack shit
6. *I u menia ne poluchalos' naiti normal'nuiu rabotu*  
And I wasn't able to find decent work
7. *I mne ochen' sil'no pomogali bliad'*  
And they really fucking helped me
8. *Eto tak nu ia ne znaiu ochen' kruto*  
And well I don't know it's really cool
9. *Nu i potom esli u menia est' den'gi*  
Well and if I have money later
10. *To u kakogo-to cheloveka tozhe net deneg*  
Then if someone else doesn't have any money

11. *Estestvenno nu tipa tebe tozhe pomogut*  
Well then like naturally you'll also get help
12. *Nu tipa tvoia podderzhka i pomoshch'*  
Well like your support and help
13. *Vsegda vernetsia k tebe*  
Always return to you
14. *Nu ia tak schitaiu*  
Well that's what I think
15. *I eto okhuenno tak zhit'*  
And it's so fucking cool to live like that
16. **A:** *Konechno*  
Of course

Lena's narrative about her experiences within punk allows her to explore emotions ranging from the depths of despair to the heights of happiness. Lena opens her narrative by describing her life prior to coming to punk and uses *mat*, *pizdets* (shit show) twice in line 2. Lena uses *pizdets* to establish the existence of a terrible situation. The deictic term *tam* (there) points the reader to a particular time and place in her life when everything was "shit." Unlike *pizdets*, *bliad'* does not give us information about her situation. Instead, *bliad'* gives her interlocutors information about her stance towards the situation she just created. *Bliad'*, used in tandem with *pizdets*, reinforces just how much of a "shit show" she experienced at that point in her life. Similarly, in line 5 Lena does not simply say: "I didn't work"; she chooses to make use of *mat*, "*nikhuia ne rabotala*" (didn't do shit) to describe her state of affairs. *Mat* helps draw attention to the dire state of affairs she found herself in at that point in her life, and *mat* allows her to claim additional authority as she portrays the facts of her life.

Within this narrative Lena uses *mat* to describe both incredibly positive and negative experiences in her life. In line 7, Lena says "*I mne ochen sil'no pomogali bliad'*" (and they really fucking helped me) to describe that moment when punks came to her aid in the midst of her suffering. *Bliad'*, in line 7, emphasizes the extent to which punks helped Lena in a moment of need. That is, *bliad'* increases the force of the utterance. The final instance of *mat* in this narrative comes in Lena's evaluation of punk culture and the kinds of mutual support she describes. Lena says "*eto okhuenno tak zhit'*" (it's fucking cool to live like that) and uses *mat* to offer a positive evaluation of the kinds of punk values and morals that she values—mutual support. For Lena this represents one of the most important aspects of punk culture (and indeed elsewhere [Furman 2016] I show that mutual support is one of the most important and aspirational features of the Russian punk scene in general). Her use of *mat* to take a strongly positive evaluative stance on the policy of mutual support publicly displays its prominence to her interlocutors (me and Aleksei).

Lena uses *mat* to perform both of these interactional tasks in the span of a single short narrative and shows how speakers can use *mat* to lay claim to additional authority on biographical and moral aspects of their life. In the final two excerpts I focus on how women in punk use *mat* to strengthen their epistemic stance and claim

subcultural authority. In example 8 Lena uses *mat* to take evaluative stances that shift between stances that frame her perspective and stances that frame the perspective of the police. In example 9 the debate as to whether or not the musician Fanny Kaplan is or is not riot grrrl uncovers how women in the scene use *mat* to bolster stances of epistemic authority.

Scholars analyzing Western punk often eschew its relationship to political movements (Bennett 1999; Muggleton and Weinzierl 2003; Stahl 2003; Debies-Carl 2014). Yet, in Russia the less tolerant political climate has resulted in consistent conflict with the police (whom the punks refer to as *musor*, “trash”). During my time in the field, the police (and occasionally even OMON, the Russian equivalent of a SWAT team) shut down punk concerts, festivals, and even art exhibits. In 2012 the Duma passed a bill that targeted “extremism.” The passage of this bill led to the creation a new government agency, Center for Combating Extremism. The new law, combined with the creation of this Center, gave the government sufficient latitude to label punk activities as “extremist.” Moreover, the fact that many punks identified as anarchists resulted in frequent harassment from the police.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, police so commonly harassed punks that informants recounted arrest stories where police referred to them by their nicknames. This harassment made illegal practices a frequent topic of conversation. In this example, Lena describes what she believes to be a common practice amongst police—the deliberate creation of guilt against a vulnerable person.

**Example 8: “No fucking witnesses”**

1. *Da u tebia net svidetelei nikhuia*  
Yea, you don’t have any fucking witnesses
2. *Da. Net svidet-*  
Yeah, there aren’t any witne
3. *Ne bylo svidetelei*  
There weren’t any witnesses
4. *Nikto ne videl tipa ubiistvo*  
Nobody saw, like, the murder
5. *I poetomu bliad’*  
And that’s fucking why
6. *Oni prosto vyloveli chuvaka*  
They just grabbed some dude
7. *Kotorogo nashli na ulitse*  
That they found on the street
8. *Vashche pervogo popavshegosia*  
Just the first one on the scene
9. *Da ty bliad’ ubiitsa*  
Yes you are the fucking murderer

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<sup>11</sup> The government has continued to wield this law in the broadest sense possible, arresting people ranging from the feminist activists in Pussy Riot in 2012 to the government’s most recent oppositional activist target Mark Galperin (see *Moscow Times*, February 7, 2017, <https://themoscow-times.com/news/russian-opposition-activist-mark-galperin-arrested-57064>).

10. *Menia ne ebet bliad'*  
And no one fucking needs you
11. *I na desiat' let sazhaiut*  
And they'll be in jail for ten years
12. *Ni v chem ne povinnogo cheloveka*  
Aren't guilty of anything

Lena's discourse shifts between two evaluative frames: one for the police and one for herself. Yet her deliberate use of *mat* to emphasize stances remains constant. In lines 1–4 she uses the second person singular *ty* (you) to refer to the suspect and creates two discursive figures in this story world: the police officer and the suspect. The instance of *mat* (*nikhuia* translates literally as “there is not cock,” although more properly as “absolutely fucking none”) in line 1 adds certainty to the already established fact that the suspect lacks witnesses who can attest to their innocence. Her utterances in lines 1–4 display how Lena mobilizes the discursive figure of the police officer to enact a situation that confirms her own suspicions about police motives. The officer in her description proves guilt not by the presence of guilt but by the absence of the proof of innocence. In this story world, the officer preys on the vulnerable circumstances of the innocent suspect. In line 5 Lena switches discursive frames from the point of view of the officer to the discursive frame of her own perspective. *Bliad'*, working in tandem with the discourse marker *poetomu* (and that's why) in line 5, strengthens the negative evaluation which *poetomu* introduces. In line 9 Lena again switches the discursive frame and generates dialogue for the discursive figure of the officer. *Mat* once again reinforces the speaker's stance. Namely, *bliad'* increases the discursive figure's epistemic stance of certainty about the suspect's guilt. In this utterance, *bliad'* functions similarly to English speakers' use of “fucking” in utterances such as “the murderer” versus “the *fucking* murderer.” The use of *mat* in line 10 serves a similar purpose. Lena's discursive figure of the policeman uses the conventionalized phrase “*menia ne ebet*” (“I can't be fucked” but closer to “I could give a shit” or “I could give a fuck”) to position the officer as indifferent to their explicit use of illegal practice. The discursive figure then uses *bliad'* to emphasize the extent of their indifference.

Lena uses *mat* in this example to manage knowledge and speaker certainty about their propositions. Not only is the discursive figure of the officer claiming the guilt of the suspect, the officer claims the suspect is the *fucking* murder. Not only are there no witnesses, there are no *fucking* witnesses. *Mat* establishes authoritative knowledge relative to some proposition. *Mat* and the stances *mat* emphasizes effectively position Lena as possessing knowledge about the corrupt activity of police. In the next example I further demonstrate how women in the scene use *mat* to claim authoritative knowledge on subcultural domains.

This excerpt from an interview on punk culture captures Masha and Olesia as they discuss the finer points of riot grrrl culture (a third wave feminist punk movement in the United States) in Russia and how they navigate a disagreement—which band more closely approximates the features of riot grrrl, Fanny Kaplan or Shchelki?

**Example 9: That's not riot grrrl**

1. **M:** *Eto ne riot grrrl*  
This isn't riot grrrl
2. *Eto prosto kakie-to p'ianye devitsy*  
They're just some drunk chicks
3. *Kotorye vygliadiat skoree kak grunzhitsy*  
That look more like grunge chicks
4. *I igraiut ochen' duratskuiu muzyku*  
And play idiotic music
5. *Ili eto voobshche ne prikol'no*  
Or it's just really not cool
6. *Eto khuevaia muzyka vot tak vot*  
It's just like really shitty music
7. *A eshche kakie-to gruppy est'*  
And there are some other groups too
8. *Tam gde igraiut Fanni Kaplan*  
There's that Fanny Kaplan
9. **O:** *Fanni Kaplan kotorye vashche darkvaiv igraiut*  
Fanny Kaplan that plays darkwave
10. *No oni tipa bol'she bliad' riot grrrl chem Shchelki*  
But they're more like fucking riot grrrl than Shchelki
11. *Potomu chto oni feministki tipa*  
Because they're like feminists
12. *Oni tipa vrubaiutsia v DIY*  
They like get DIY

Masha and Olesia both use *mat* to strengthen their epistemic stance (their claim to know) about punk culture. In line 6 Masha claims that the band Rvanina's music is "*khuevaia muzyka*" (cock-music, but more loosely translated as "shitty"). *Khuevaia muzyka* comes only after Masha already provided her interlocutors (me and Olesia) with a set of evaluative terms about Rvanina. Rvanina consists of just *p'ianye devitsy* (drunk girls) who look like *grunzhitsy* (grungers) and play *duratskuiu muzyku* (idiotic music). Subsequently their music evokes only the evaluative statement *khuevaia muzyka* (shitty music) from Masha. *Mat* here serves as the final summation of Masha's evaluation. It encapsulates all of her previous qualms and brings the final evaluation of Rvanina to a close as they move on to the next topic of discussion. *Mat's* placement as the final evaluative term on the topic of Rvanina demonstrates the evaluative force that *mat* carries with it when used as a marker of interactional stance.

Masha must manage the rhetorical dilemma of conveying her belief that Fanny Kaplan, a musical group from darkwave rather than the punk scene, more closely adheres to riot grrrl culture than Shchelki, a band ostensibly in the punk scene. Masha makes use of *bliad'* in line 10 to claim additional subcultural authority. Without this Masha likely would lack the necessary subcultural authority needed to

situate a punk band outside the category of punk rock while also situating a band outside of punk culture within punk culture. A rhetorical move such as this requires a high degree of subcultural authority over punk rock. Masha appeals to a linguistic register that allows for this kind of move—*mat*. Fanny Kaplan is not just more riot grrrl, they are more *fucking* riot grrl than Shchelki. After using *mat* to make this strong claim about the bounds of punk rock, Masha then justifies her position when she lays out the key criteria for her evaluation—feminism and an understanding of DIY culture.

## CONCLUSION

In this article I argue three related points: (1) Russian punk highly values performances of masculinity and marginalizes the feminine; (2) *mat* directly indexes authoritative stances that in turn indirectly index masculinity; and finally (3) that female punks use *mat* to align with a punk community that often bars them from key performance spaces. *Mat* requires zero access to public stages, zero access to mosh pits, and does not even require the space of a complete narrative to convey its indexical values. As such, *mat* offers women in the punk scene a significant amount of covert prestige and subcultural capital. That is, *mat* allows women (or anyone who might have less access to meaningful spaces in the scene) the opportunity to take an authoritative stance that voices masculinity and earns women subcultural capital.

Moreover, if we zoom out a bit from my work in the field and examine how prominent Russian punks with access to the stage use *mat*, we see that *mat* functions similarly in these contexts as well. The band BARTO uses *mat* to indict capitalist values (and even women who strive to function as a cog in the capitalist wheel) in the aptly titled song “*Skoro vse ebnetsia*” (Everything will soon be fucked). Iulia Kogan, the only female in the otherwise all male ska-punk group Leningrad, made prolific use of *mat* while she sang with Leningrad. She cowrote songs like “*Moi khui*” (My cocks), which only barely metaphorically reference oral sex. Yet, in an interview with *Sobesednik.ru* she said she no longer uses *mat* in her performances now that she has left the band. “It’s just that in Leningrad *mat* is incredibly relevant, and if outside of it a girl curses, it’s strange somehow. Like a diagnosis.”<sup>12</sup> Kogan’s quote solidifies mainstream expectations about who can use *mat* (i.e., men) at the same time as it highlights the primacy of *mat* as a linguistic and social code for women in punk.

In addition to highlighting *mat* usage among Russian female punks, this article also calls for an analysis that attends to interactional stances as they unfold through talk, through even a single utterance or a single lexical item. This interactional approach helps the analyst better capture the complex social work that *mat* performs. When we analyze not only metacommentary around *mat* but also *mat* usage, we see that *mat* does not simply perform masculinity. Female punks use *mat* to perform

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<sup>12</sup> Ol’ga Saburova, “Iulia Kogan rasskazala, pochemu ushla iz gruppy ‘Leningrad’ i perestrala rugat’sia matom,” *Sobesednik.ru*, October 8, 2013 (<http://bit.ly/2xN2XgB>).

various tasks. *Mat* helps female punks manage the moral order (see examples 5, 6, and 7) within punk, and it helps female punks police the boundaries of certain punk rock categories like riot grrrl (see example 9). As we examine the role of talk in the creation of situated interactional stances, we necessarily also engage with larger circulating concepts of gender. Without attending to an examination of the kinds of stances that *mat* helps create during an interaction, we cannot adequately understand the multiple functions of *mat* and instead reduce its function to gender performance only.

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# МУЖСКОЙ МИР РУССКОГО МАТА: ЗАПРЕТНЫЕ СЛОВА В ЯЗЫКЕ ЖЕНЩИН-ПАНКОВ

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На основании этнографического исследования и дискурсивного анализа в этой статье раскрываются сексистские приемы, применяющиеся среди якобы гендерно равных участников панк-сцены в Санкт-Петербурге. Проведенное исследование показывает, как женщины-панки при помощи ненормативной лексики пытаются преодолеть гегемонное понимание женственности. Значение нецензурной лексики как маркера панк-субкультуры достаточно велико, и в данном случае использование соответствующих выражений играет роль ритуала, снимающего для женщин барьеры входа и присутствия в группе. Анализ позволяет показать, что использование ненормативной лексики не является чисто мужской практикой, а выражает маскулинность вообще, отражает авторитет говорящего. Детальное исследование употребления ненормативной лексики женщинами-панками позволяет выяснить, как девушки пытаются отстаивать свои позиции в группе, которые в противном случае оказываются маргинализированы. Применение этнометодологических теорий индексикальности (indexicality) и позиций показывает, как микроситуации употребления нецензурной лексики одновременно взаимодействуют с макроконцепциями традиционного гендерного порядка и опираются на них. Основные гендерные нормы включают запрет для девушек на матерную брань. Панк-девушки могут эффективно использовать этот культурный запрет, нарушая его, чтобы дистанцироваться от основных концепций женственности, одновременно отвергая традиционный гендерный порядок и накапливая субкультурный капитал. В статье рассматриваемая языковая практика не отделяется от макроконцепции гендерного порядка. Напротив, в ходе анализа прослеживается, как последняя структурирует лингвистическую практику и как она сама в свою очередь структурируется лингвистическими практиками. Таким образом, эта статья предлагает критический взгляд на то, как микроситуации употребления нецензурной лексики взаимодействуют с макроконцепциями гендерного порядка и создают альтернативную панк-женственность.

**Ключевые слова:** язык и гендер; анализ дискурса; социолингвистика; язык и идеология; индексикальность; русский панк; этнография; Pussy Riot