TITLE: WORDS MATTER: A LINGUISTIC INVESTIGATION OF DEMOCRACY IN RUSSIA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Leaders moving toward democracy sometimes begin, as did Mikhail Gorbachev, by introducing rhetorical innovations. Historical case studies indicate that undemocratic polities often feature restrictive linguistic codes that demarcate political speech from the vernacular, to limit political discourse to an initiated elite, to help preclude political participation by the many, and to obscure reality from them. By their implication that ordinary speech is inadequate for political deliberation, these linguistic codes may also render political speech offensive, as well as obscure, to citizens. Innovative rhetoric may be used to communicate to citizens that they can begin taking the stance of the formal political equality essential to a democracy. Survey experiments conducted in Moscow in 1992 and 1993 test the hypothesis that Russian citizens prefer democratic speech and through it are less likely to report inability to distinguish among competing political programs.

This report is perhaps more interesting for the examples it reviews of such restrictive linguistic and rhetorical techniques taken from American and other polities (pages 2-5), than for its findings, which turned out less definitive than might have been hoped (pages 22-24). Briefly, they are:

A) Apparently support for democracy in Moscow diminished from October 1992 to October 1993.

B) A strong antipathy continues for the old style, Brezhnevite, undemocratic style of speech which Moscow citizens find demeaning and obscurantist. "The old speech, they said, treated them like fools."

C) The transition in contemporary Russian attitudes toward political speech from indignation to calm criticism recapitulates a development in the early United States. In American English today, the sentence "that's just rhetoric" dismisses words as inconsequential, but at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the same sentence was an expression of popular anger, a rebuff to the pretentious speech of self-proclaimed social betters (Cmiel 1990, 39-49). As it ceases to be an object of attention, political language becomes less a screen in front of, and more a window on, politics.

[And therein lies the main, unspoken, value of this paper; that continuing shifts in linguistic and rhetorical techniques serve as signposts of continuing political shifts.]

1Composed by National Council staff.
Why do politicians leading breakthroughs to democracy sometimes begin by speaking in a new way? When Mikhail Gorbachev promised glasnost’, he became only the most recent example of a democratizing politician who started by breaking with restrictive linguistic practices that demarcated the political speech of undemocratic elites from the vernacular of the society they ruled. Although studies of past cases document an interaction between a new political speech and democratic initiatives, systematic observation of audience response to the old and new rhetorics has naturally been impractical. Scholars have analyzed written records of the speech of politicians and cited scattered commentaries by members of public audiences or by linguists observing the change, but have been unable to sample the populations that heard the new rhetoric. As a contemporary process, the transitions toward democracy today in countries like Russia offer unprecedented opportunities to investigate whether a popular audience experiencing a transition distinguishes between the old and new speech and what distinctions the population makes.

Politicians should move toward democracy only when they expect to find a receptive popular audience. Recent survey research in Russia has revealed substantial popular support for democratic institutions (Finifter and Mickiewicz 1992; Hahn 1991; Duch 1993). While convinced by this research, I note that any conclusion is more credible if it can be sustained by investigation based on other methodological principles. Survey research cues respondents with closed questionnaires written by the researcher and limits the respondents’ choices to the options offered by the researcher. Experimental research cues respondents with real political messages (albeit selected by the researcher) and with open questionnaires allowing the respondents freedom to choose any response (on experimental design, see Iyengar 1991, 17-25.). I investigate whether democratic politicians in Russia found a receptive audience by manipulating whether respondents see speech cues from undemocratic, early transitional, late transitional, or democratic periods and observing whether popular responses become more favorable when the cues are taken from more democratic eras.

I begin with a review of case studies of restrictive linguistic practices used to establish or sustain undemocratic polities and of the contribution made by rhetorical innovation to historical transitions toward democracy, whether successful or not. I then summarize the procedure and results of a survey experiment conducted in Moscow in October 1992 and repeated in
October-November 1993. The experiment tested a hypothesis drawn from the case studies that undemocratic rhetoric disaffects populations by denying their capacity for reasoned political discussion and by making politics obscure to them, while democratizing rhetoric draws the population to take sides by unveiling the political process in ordinary language familiar to them.

I. Vernaculars and Democracy

In many undemocratic polities, restrictive linguistic codes have established an invidious distinction between an elevated speech declared appropriate for politics and the denigrated talk of disenfranchised masses. One essential of democracy is the formal equality of adults in the exercise of political rights (Lijphart, 1984). Elections are typical of democracy not only because they allow the mass public to exercise influence on government but also because each person casts the same number of votes, regardless of what other endowments may vary their real political influence. In this manner the electoral institution communicates formal equality. By drawing invidious distinctions that establish some as "betters," the demarcation between higher and lower kinds of speech denies formal equality. Thus the linguistic restrictions help to constitute a polity as undemocratic.

For undemocratic elites, compliance with restrictions on their public speech has been one way to set themselves apart and above. The United States, Hungary, France, Turkey, England, Germany, and Indonesia offer documented examples from the late eighteenth through the twentieth centuries of the contribution of restrictive linguistic practices to the maintenance of political inequality.

Throughout the nineteenth century political elites in the United States enforced restrictions on the public speech of the president. Rarely welcomed to speak publicly, on those few occasions the president was restricted to "popular instruction in constitutional principle and the articulation of the general tenor and direction of presidential policy...." Presidents who departed from these conventions encountered both informal and formal sanctions. Article 10 of the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson accused him of "mak[ing] and deliver[ing] with a loud voice certain intemperate, inflammatory and scandalous harangues... against Congress." As one Senator said, the charges against Johnson on grounds of bad speech were both more telling and more justified by precedent than the rest of the bill of impeachment (Tulis 1987, 47, 91-92). By precluding presidents from mobilizing public pressure against Congress, the restrictions imposed on nineteenth-century presidents safeguarded the autonomy
of legislative logrolling by which Congress preserved a variety of inequalities such as slavery, post-Reconstruction white supremacy, and denial of the franchise to women.

Orators addressing the Hungarian Diet under Habsburg rule were required to speak in Latin, which was also the language of public administration and the courts throughout the Hungarian kingdom. Use of this language symbolized the defense of medieval privilege against Habsburg absolutism's effort to spread German throughout the empire, and for this reason Latin drew bitter complaints from absolutists such as Metternich. At the same time, by speaking Latin the aristocrats mounted their defense without jeopardizing, by the use of Magyar, the dehumanizing distinction established by the statute of 1514 between "the people [which] comprehends here only the bishops, lords, the other aristocrats, and all the nobles, but not the commoners" and the "plebs [among which] only the commoners are comprehended" (Kann 1950, 116; Jaszi 1929, 64-71; Barany 1968, 117-118; Andics, 1975). Like the Magyar aristocrats, French nobles confronting the revolutionaries in 1790 tried to insist on retention of "our ancient formulas" that, by confining political metaphors to relations among God, a father, and his family, left no role open to commoners but filial obedience (Hunt 1984, 29).

Ottoman Turkey and England in Burke's time show a curious parallel. Ottoman officials spoke and wrote the usul-i kalem, or "bureaucratic style," which was distinguished from ordinary Turkish by the incorporation of many Arab and Persian loanwords used, not according to Turkish grammar, but to the rules of their grammars of origin. Thus a participant in politics needed to master three distinct grammars before he could speak or write, and ordinary Turks could not understand written texts even read aloud to them (Lewis 1968, 426-435). Although profoundly more democratic than the sultanate, until 1818 and even afterwards the English parliament decided the acceptance or rejection of petitions by determining whether their language was "decorous." Decorous language conformed to grammar rules taken from Greek and Latin and taught only in the so-called public schools to the sons of the gentry. Like an Ottoman Turk, an Englishman was obligated to know three grammars before he became eligible for politics (Smith 1986, 1-34).

Leaders instituting undemocratic regimes have installed restrictive linguistic codes that identify their bearers as eligible to act in politics. The Nazis took standard German, introduced new metaphors drawn from war and technology, adapted models drawn from church speech to the formation of new secular words, rearranged the syntax to make room in sentences for insertion of their preferred redefinitions of standard words, and expelled some foreign words in favor of German counterparts while increasing the frequency of the appearance of other foreign terms. These actions produced an "NS-Deutsch" by use of which
Germans could identify themselves to one another as Nazi loyalists (Seidel and Seidel-Slotty 1961; Young 1991). After expelling the Netherlanders, who themselves had constituted a colonial bureaucracy by teaching Javanese to speak Dutch, the Sukarno regime turned to Indonesian, a synthetic language originally adapted to the anti-colonial struggle and even today only a regional language "outside official channels." Even in the capital Indonesian is used more for politics and commerce than for daily life, more likely to be discussed in bahasa Jakarta (Anderson 1990, 141-142).

In all these cases, the artificial rhetoric of politics reinforces the disenfranchisement of the poor by confining the opportunity for sanctioned political activity to persons with leisure allowing the extended language study necessary to acquire the restrictive code. Transitions to democracy, observable in greater equality of rights, often begin when leaders make conscious decisions to break the code.

Woodrow Wilson finally broke through the restraints on presidential speech. Having previously formulated an explicit theory of public opinion, Wilson argued for the League of Nations not by citing constitutional principle – as he should have done under the existing conventions restricting presidential speech – but by interpreting world conditions for a mass public audience, issuing emotional appeals for citizens to pressure his opponents in the Senate (Tulis 1987, 147-161). Although Wilson failed of his immediate object, the heat of his battle with the Senate precluded the two branches from cooperating to block the enfranchisement of women. And he forged the rhetorical weapons with which Franklin Roosevelt would achieve more success in a renewed onslaught against Congress (Zvesper 1984) and which have become the ordinary medium of mass politics today (Kernell 1986).

Advocating extension of the right to own property to the serf-tenants who composed the bulk of Hungary’s population, as well as extension of the franchise beyond the aristocratic "people," Count Istvan Széchenyi launched his campaign for liberal reform by addressing the 1825 Diet in Magyar. His action represented a strategic choice among linguistic options, not an unconscious reversion to his native tongue. Széchenyi knew Latin, and in his personal life he spoke and wrote German rather than Magyar (Kann 1950, 118-123; Andic 1975, 5-8; Barany 1968). Similarly, the Turkish revolutionaries of 1908 dropped the usul-i kalem in favor of a new speech "based on the spoken language of the educated classes of the capital" but still full of Arabic and Persian words and consequently distant from the vernacular. Mustafa Kemal then organized the Turkish Linguistic Society to replace Arabic and Persian terms while retaining European vocabulary symbolic of the modern, secular, and more democratic state he founded. He also ordered that the Arabic alphabet, which was so complex that even years of
study did not enable pupils to read a newspaper, be discarded in favor of Latin letters (Lewis 1968, 278, 426-434). Kemal’s action paralleled the decision of democratic Germany to abandon the complex fraktur favored by the Nazis for more easily readable roman type.

Edmund Burke tried to dissuade commoners pressing for extension of the franchise by warning them against lightly overthrowing a proven political institution. But he expressed his ideas in terms sufficiently concrete that leaders of the movement to extend the franchise praised his rhetoric for providing the ordinary Englishman for the first time with the means of political self-expression. Satirizing the whole distinction between refined and vulgar speech, they both copied and mocked Burke’s disparaging "swinish multitude" by calling themselves "Pigs" (Smith 1986, 81) -- a rhyming pun that also ridiculed the parliamentary Whigs. Countering the "ancient formulas," the French revolutionaries not only guillotined the real King but also erased the symbolic King. In pictorial representations of France they replaced his majesty with the youthful Marianne, whose femininity evoked masculine protection and devotion but did not cue subjection (Hunt 1984, 87-94).

Why should linguistic change initiate democracy? What were the advantages for Gorbachev of beginning with glasnost'? I do not find it hard to understand that an electoral politician recognizes an incentive to address voters in language they understand and welcome. More problematic is why undemocratic regimes go to the trouble of inventing, learning and enforcing on their officials an elaborate artificial rhetoric. When their speech insults mass publics, undemocratic regimes presumably make their task of retaining power more rather than less difficult by generating more rather than less opposition to their rule.

Linguistic restrictions participate in a more general complex of social barriers characteristic of undemocratic polities. A restrictive linguistic code is only one among the obstacles which undemocratic rulers place in the path of popular influence on regime choices. Kaminski (1992, 244-245) identifies a series of barriers in communist societies. The confinement of politics to professionals enabled the communist state to ignore the "needs and aspiration of the population." The "producer's market" separated production of goods and services from popular demand. Equal justice was frustrated by the "prosecution's court" in which "the prosecutor has more weight... than the defense, while at the stage of investigation, the position of the prosecution is in turn weaker than that of the investigating officer." To Kaminski’s list of institutional barriers one may add the political police, whose activities ensured what Roeder (1989) has called "coercive departicipation" of the public by deterring association and sowing mistrust, as well as the false politics of uncontested elections and
rubber-stamp legislatures that caused even participants to disbelieve in the potential of political action.

Although Kaminski, in an all too common misreading of George Orwell, argues that artificiality of political language is distinctive to communist regimes, reading Orwell more carefully James Scott (1990) has argued that any relation of domination, however mild, leads to the construction of a "public transcript" which becomes more divorced from ordinary speech where the relations of domination are more asymmetric. In Scott’s view the justifications advanced by the public transcript command belief neither from oppressed nor from oppressors. Instead both regard the transcript as a spectacle in which both participate out of self-interest. Where rulers cannot hear, as in the places of concealment where American slaves shouted into pots to keep silent the voicing of their outrage, the oppressed ridicule the claims omnipresent in public transcripts that domination is rule in behalf of its victims. In their own private preserves, the oppressors derogate their underlings in terms that mock their public claims of benevolence toward those whom they rule.

A public transcript comes into existence because both parties gain by concealing the opinions they express when outside each others’ hearing. Scott points out that by rehearsing the public transcript, the weak escape the physical retaliation that they would suffer if they expressed their true opinion of the strong. He also argues that the public transcript benefits the strong by hiding their secret abuses that would otherwise discredit their right to rule. This last claim (Scott 1990, 105-106) is open to question. The strong need not concede their right to rule even if their abuses become known, while the weak who suffer abuses are already aware of them and their detestation for the strong does not increase with publicity.

It seems more likely that, as observers of communist polities have argued, rulers’ compliance with restrictions on what they say in public serves as a protective screen, ensuring that competitive ideologies or political debates are expressed only in a semi-intelligible form, if at all.... that which is communicated is inexact and this imprecision is valuable in maintaining an atmosphere of uncertainty in which the party finds it easier to... promote depoliticization (Schoepflin 1981, 65; see also Seriot 1985; Vasil’eva 1982; Urban 1988).

By contrast to an undemocratic elite, a democratizing leader who breaks the rhetorical code invites the public into politics by exposing its conflicts to their gaze. To start with rhetoric offers material advantages. If language, a command economy, and an overpowering police force are all barriers to popular influence on government, democratization could start with the dismantling of economic or police powers. But these institutions exist because they enable elites to increase their payoffs by exercising preponderant influence over society, and a
leader who began by ordering existing elites to abandon their positions of influence would trigger immediate resistance. A leader who begins by changing the rhetoric, on the other hand, preserves established payoffs to the elite in the short run while offering the population a mode of communication that its members can use to organize for institutional change in the long run. Thus the leader who begins with rhetoric defers opposition until a countervailing popular organization has had the opportunity to form. The opportunity for a democratizing leader to transgress the established linguistic restrictions, of course, depends on circumstances that prevent rivals in the elite from enforcing them. Among such circumstances one may mention economic declines that diminish the incentives for members of the elite to act in concert, as well as defeats in war that weaken the elite's powers of enforcement, but there may be many other circumstances.

Thus at the beginning of the transition toward democracy in the Soviet Union, Gorbachev did not engage in the action of imposing economic reforms or limits on the powers of the KGB. Instead he engaged in the rhetoric of proposing these measures (which he knew the Politburo would never agree to enact to the extent of his suggestions) in combination with glasnost’ — an invitation to the previously silenced Soviet public to begin speaking. Like the French revolutionaries of whom a contemporary wrote, "it is by words that they accomplished their ends; words did everything" (Hunt 1984, 187), at the end of his presidency Gorbachev posed a rhetorical question to an interviewer who had voiced the widely held skepticism about the wisdom of his political strategy: "Do you think it is that easy to move to democracy using only one lever — glasnost’, the word, and not force?" (Literaturnaia gazeta, 4 December 1991).

2. An Experimental Test in Russia

The historical cases document the use of language, first to maintain invidious distinctions between those considered people and those considered plebs, and then to abolish those distinctions. But unlike these cases, all of which rely on records of the speakers' behavior, the Russian transition to democracy, being contemporary, offers an opportunity to investigate the response to rhetorical innovation by observing the audience. In October 1992, I undertook a pilot experiment to acquire observations of audience response; I then repeated the experiment with a larger sample in October-November 1993. These experiments enable us to observe whether Muscovites cared whether political leaders changed the way they talk.

Hypothesis: The case studies suggest that undemocratic speech excludes the population from politics by obscuring the discussion of policy choices and by deprecating the population's
competence to formulate political ideas. The new speech invites people into politics by
increasing the visibility of policy debate and by assuming that the audience is able to
understand political argument. If this hypothesis is valid, the popular audience should perceive
the rhetoric of an undemocratic government as confusing and demeaning. Some members of
the populace may continue to find the new speech obscure or offensive, since a transition to
democracy is the opposite of a guarantee that popular audiences will uniformly approve any
given political leader, but the negative reactions should diminish as a proportion of the popular
responses and more positive ones should appear. The null hypothesis holds that the population
will be indifferent to the distinction between old and new speeches. Any change in the
responses of sample audiences should be indistinguishable from chance variation.

Research Design: The perfect experiment would have surveyed audience response to
undemocratic speeches at the time of delivery and compared these responses to surveys of
audience response to speeches given under democracy. Surveys of audiences for undemocratic
speech are precisely what undemocratic regimes prohibit, however, and therefore this
experiment must rely on a heroic assumption: that audiences today respond to the old speeches
in a manner sufficiently representative of their response at the time of delivery. I will present
some circumstantial evidence from the experiment that appears to warrant this assumption.

The stimuli consisted of equal numbers of texts delivered by a variety of political leaders
during four periods. The "Brezhnev" period includes speeches from 1983 or earlier and was
undemocratic. The "early Gorbachev" period includes speeches from 1986; this year marked
the beginning of the transition, when Gorbachev had broached the issue of democratic reforms
but had not yet proposed competitive elections. The "late Gorbachev" period includes
speeches from 1989, when the first competitive and partly free elections were held. The
"post-Soviet" period includes speeches from 1992-1993, when Russia was governed by a
popularly elected President and an indirectly elected legislature. In each period I have
included speeches by both proponents and opponents of liberalization, although liberalizers are
obviously fewer and harder to identify in the Brezhnev period and more numerous in the late
Gorbachev and post-Soviet periods. In order to reduce the effect of variation among
individuals rather than across periods, where possible I have included speeches by the same
person in different periods; thus speeches by Gorbachev are found in each of the first three
periods, Yeltsin in each of the last three, the anti-reform Politburo members Ligachev and
Vorotnikov and the pro-reform Politburo member Iakovlev in both of the middle two, and the
democrat Popov in both of the last two periods.
In 1992 I presented the respondents with photocopier reproductions of texts taken from printed books or newspapers, varying considerably in length; in 1993 I entered the texts into a computer and prepared printed versions emulating newspaper columns. The set of speeches used in 1993 included no duplicates of the set used in 1992. In both iterations of the experiment I deleted all references to the speaker by name or by title, and I contracted some of the longest texts by deleting sections of the speech, particularly those concerned with foreign policy. Dates and references to current events and to institutions such as party congresses or five-year plans were left intact. In 1992 I chose four texts from each period and showed each text to ten persons, for a sample size of 160; in 1993 I chose six texts from each period and again showed each text to ten persons, for a sample size of 240.

The respondents were chosen from residents of Moscow by random selection of the address of an apartment building and then random selection of apartments within each building. Each subsample of ten was controlled to ensure that each text was read by approximately equal numbers of men and women, of persons with and without higher education, and of persons in white-collar and blue-collar jobs, and by persons throughout the age spectrum. For each period in the 1993 experiment, the mean age of the respondents varied from 43 to 45 and the range from 17-74 to 17-83; the corresponding mean for 1992 varied from 38 to 44 and the range, from 18-77 to 18-84.

Samples of forty or sixty respondents per period, especially when drawn by sampling collective residences not persons, are too small for valid inferences about the proportion of all Muscovites sharing the responses of the sample, but these samples are small enough for strong conclusions whether the change in the proportions within each sample observed across differing test conditions is distinguishable from chance variation – the objective of the experiment.

Interviews took place in the homes of the respondents. Each respondent was invited to participate in an experiment on public interest in press materials in return for a payment of five hundred rubles in 1992 and twelve hundred rubles in 1993 (less than $1.20 in 1992, slightly more than $1.00 in 1993). The interviewer recorded the sex of the participant and answers to five questions about age, residence in Moscow, occupation, and education (two questions); then the text was presented to the respondent. After the respondent finished reading the text, the interviewer asked three general, neutral questions designed to elicit comment about the texts: what are the main ideas in the text, was it interesting, and what is your opinion of it. Then the respondent was asked whether the text had been seen previously, who the speaker might have been, and how often the respondent read newspapers and how many subscriptions the family received. The 1992 interviewers were instructed to record the responses on tape, but
respondents refused to talk into a recorder, and as this contingency had been anticipated, the interviewers were instructed to take verbatim notes. Their notes of the interviews were then recorded on a computer diskette. Of course, the records are not exact records of the respondent's speech, but inspection reveals considerable variety that indicates a degree of faithfulness to the originals. Each interviewer was paid the ruble equivalent of $5.50 per interview.

Coding and Reliability: Open questions have the advantage that they do not suggest the response (Schumann and Presser 1981, 88-94), but variation in the responses makes them difficult to code. The first co-author (a native English speaker) read the Russian texts of all the 1992 responses and extracted items of manifest content which appeared relevant to the hypothesis. The third co-author (a native Russian speaker) wrote coding rules abstracted from these items. The second co-author employed two native speakers of Russian to code both the 1992 and 1993 responses. In Table 1 I present the scores for inter-coder reliability in both years; for all variables reliability was excellent.

3. Results and Analysis

The case studies suggest that undemocratic speech is insulting and unintelligible to the disenfranchised population, while in the transition to democracy, qualities previously distinguishing political rhetoric from the common speech tend to disappear. The null hypothesis holds that any differences in audience response to speech from undemocratic and democratic periods should be attributable to random variation. Although the results of my experiment remain susceptible to more than one interpretation, the distinctions made by the Moscow audience can be observed in two categories of responses: evaluations of the speeches and complaints that a given speech cannot be distinguished from other political documents.

Evaluations -- From Aversion to Polarization: Four items in the responses express the respondent's evaluation of the speech. Displaying high interitem covariance (Cronbach's alpha exceeds 0.87), these four items are suitable for combination into a unified scale: (1) expressions of trust or distrust in the speaker; (2) statements that the text was interesting or uninteresting; (3) opinions that the text was rich or poor in content; and (4) expressions of positive or negative affect. (A fifth item, concerned with the topicality of the speech, showed sufficient interitem correlation to have been added to the scale, but I have excluded this item because of the ambiguity of the Russian aktual'no, which can mean either "topical" or "contemporary." Since the speeches from the undemocratic periods are old, a response that the
Table 1
Inter-Rater Reliability for Coded Items, 1992 and 1993

1992 Responses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Text</th>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Expected Agreement</th>
<th>Kappa</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>Pr &gt; Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is/Is Not</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topical</td>
<td>91.25%</td>
<td>42.26%</td>
<td>0.8485</td>
<td>13.21</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
<td>97.50%</td>
<td>49.81%</td>
<td>0.9502</td>
<td>15.70</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic</td>
<td>95.00%</td>
<td>48.74%</td>
<td>0.9025</td>
<td>12.05</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotyped</td>
<td>96.88%</td>
<td>50.56%</td>
<td>0.9368</td>
<td>11.85</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>98.75%</td>
<td>46.62%</td>
<td>0.9766</td>
<td>16.46</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full of Content</td>
<td>93.13%</td>
<td>47.79%</td>
<td>0.8683</td>
<td>13.32</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stylistically Appealing</td>
<td>91.25%</td>
<td>55.11%</td>
<td>0.8051</td>
<td>12.44</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affectively Appealing</td>
<td>98.13%</td>
<td>34.44%</td>
<td>0.9714</td>
<td>18.68</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1993 responses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Text</th>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Expected Agreement</th>
<th>Kappa</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>Pr &gt; Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is/Is Not</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topical</td>
<td>98.00%</td>
<td>33.66%</td>
<td>0.9699</td>
<td>21.65</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
<td>96.00%</td>
<td>42.59%</td>
<td>0.9303</td>
<td>19.83</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic</td>
<td>96.80%</td>
<td>49.09%</td>
<td>0.9371</td>
<td>15.87</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotyped</td>
<td>96.80%</td>
<td>51.64%</td>
<td>0.9338</td>
<td>14.80</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>96.40%</td>
<td>42.32%</td>
<td>0.9376</td>
<td>21.06</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full of Content</td>
<td>92.80%</td>
<td>50.78%</td>
<td>0.8537</td>
<td>13.32</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stylistically Appealing</td>
<td>91.25%</td>
<td>55.11%</td>
<td>0.8051</td>
<td>16.01</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affectively Appealing</td>
<td>91.20%</td>
<td>32.60%</td>
<td>0.8694</td>
<td>21.82</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
speech is neaktual'nyi could mean simply that it is out of date, and this response might convey no evaluation of it.) Factor analysis of these four items shows that they load on a single dimension, which I have interpreted as the respondent's affective evaluation of the text.

We established a nine-point scale by assigning a value of 1 to positive evaluations in each category, 0 to failure to mention the category or expression of indifference, and -1 to negative evaluations and summing for each respondent. I then tested whether change in evaluation was attributable to random chance by conducting a one-way analysis of variance laying out the scores on the nine-point scale against the four periods. Table 2 shows the resulting means of the nine-point scale for each period in each year and the F statistics, with associated probabilities, derived by testing whether the mean in each period differs from the mean in every other period. Since the hypothesis fails if the mean decreases from one period to the next, the appropriate test is one-tailed.

We hypothesized that the evaluations would become more favorable when respondents read speeches from more democratic eras. The mean scores on the evaluation scale show that Muscovites in both years responded even less favorably to speeches from 1986, before Gorbachev had proposed contested elections, than to the speeches from the undemocratic Brezhnev era. As the speeches are drawn from more democratic periods, the means move toward zero for the 1989 speeches and even become mildly positive for the post-Soviet speeches in the 1992 experiment. In both runs of the experiment, the difference between the mean evaluations of the more democratic (late Gorbachev and post-Soviet) speeches and the mean evaluations of the undemocratic (Brezhnev and early-Gorbachev) speeches could not be attributed to chance variation. Although the means for the post-Soviet speeches are more positive than for the late-Gorbachev ones, the difference is never statistically significant.

As I further predicted, underlying the movement in the means is a transition from aversion to polarization, not to indifference. In 1993 seventy-two of 120 respondents to speeches from the Brezhnev and early Gorbachev periods recorded the two most negative scores on the nine-point evaluative scale, while fifteen of 120 recorded the two most positive scores; in 1992 fifty-five of eighty recorded the two most negative, and only four of eighty recorded the two most positive scores. In contrast to the predominance of highly negative responses to speeches from the two undemocratic periods, respondents to speeches from the late Gorbachev and post-Soviet periods were more evenly split. In 1993, forty-two of 120 respondents recorded the two most negative scores, while thirty-four of 120 recorded the two most positive scores; in 1992, the split was twenty-seven to twenty-seven of eighty. While the
Table 2
Muscovites' Evaluations of Political Speeches from Undemocratic and Democratic Periods, 1992 and 1993
Means and Significance Levels

Mean Values on Evaluation Scale (-4 to +4), by Period of Speech Stimulus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>1992</th>
<th>1993</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brezhnev</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
<td>-1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Gorbachev</td>
<td>-2.65</td>
<td>-2.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Gorbachev</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Soviet</td>
<td>0.575</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One-tailed Significance Levels, 1992 Experiment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Early Gorbachev</th>
<th>Late Gorbachev</th>
<th>Post-Soviet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brezhnev</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>F(1,156)=13.27</td>
<td>F(1,156)=25.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prob &gt; F=0.0002</td>
<td>Prob &gt; F=0.00005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Gorbachev</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>F(1,156)=14.83</td>
<td>F(1,156)=28.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prob &gt; F=0.0001</td>
<td>Prob &gt; F=0.00005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Gorbachev</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>F(1,156)=2.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prob &gt; F=0.075</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One-tailed Significance Levels, 1993 Experiment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Early Gorbachev</th>
<th>Late Gorbachev</th>
<th>Post-Soviet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brezhnev</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>F(1,236)=3.76</td>
<td>F(1,236)=6.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prob &gt; F=0.027</td>
<td>Prob &gt; F=0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Gorbachev</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>F(1,236)=9.91</td>
<td>F(1,236)=13.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prob &gt; F=0.001</td>
<td>Prob &gt; F=0.0002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Gorbachev</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>F(1,236)=0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prob &gt; F=0.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
mean evaluation moves from decidedly averse to neutral, the neutrality of the response to democratic speeches represents an increasing polarization of popular response.

While both iterations of the experiment produced statistically significant variation, the significance levels declined sharply from 1992 to 1993. In 1992 the late Gorbachev speeches are preferred to the undemocratic speeches at a .0005 significance level, and the post-Soviet speeches at a .00005 level, while in 1993 the late Gorbachev speeches are preferred at a .05 level to the Brezhnev speeches and a .001 level to the early Gorbachev speeches, and the post-Soviet speeches, at a .01 level to the Brezhnev speeches and a .0005 level to the early Gorbachev speeches. The loss of statistical significance occurred even though the sample in 1993 was fifty percent larger than the sample in 1992. The decline in significance is mirrored in a drop in the adjusted R2 from a healthy 0.31 in 1992 to an anemic 0.15 in 1993.

This loss of significance is partly attributable to the selection of speeches in 1993. The 1992 speeches included three by democrats (two by Yeltsin and one by Gavriil Popov) and one by Ruslan Khasbulatov, then a centrist; no speeches by rightists were included in 1992. The 1993 speeches included three by democrats, one by the centrist Aleksandr Vladislavlev, and two by rightists (Aleksandr Rutskoi and Aleksandr Prokhanov). When the speeches by anti-democrats are removed from the post-Soviet sample, the significance level for the difference between the responses to the Brezhnev-era speeches improves from the .01 to the .0005 level but still falls short of the 1992 level.

Either of two explanations could account for the change. The change in significance levels is mainly due to the appearance in 1993 of many more respondents who evaluate speeches from the Brezhnev era favorably. In 1992 five of forty respondents favorably evaluated Brezhnev-era speeches; in 1993 thirteen of sixty did. The first possible explanation is technical. A sample randomized by address of apartment buildings is more concentrated than one randomized by individual resident, and it may be that I simply sampled different parts of the Moscow population in the two years. Second, however, is the possibility that I have measured a real decrease in the attractiveness of democracy from 1992 to 1993 and a real recovery in Brezhnev's popularity. Consistent with this second possibility is the declining vote recorded by candidates identified as democrats in the 1993 Moscow elections compared to those three years earlier. I conducted the experiment in Moscow in the immediate aftermath of the October 3-4 street combat, which might be expected to moderate citizens' enthusiasm for democracy and which many of my respondents mentioned as a fault of democracy.

When I find more negative evaluations of speeches from the Brezhnev and early Gorbachev periods, I might simply be tapping an underlying anti-communism among my
respondents. In other words, disagreement with ideological content, not dislike for rhetorical form, might be causing the phenomenon I observe. Ideological disagreement and stylistic distaste are, of course, exceptionally hard to disentangle. Language conveys content only by differentiating form; changes in form invariably signal difference in content, while a different content cannot be communicated without altering the linguistic form. Moreover, if ideological agreement becomes more likely when the respondent has experience of many presentations of the ideology in language that the respondent finds appealing, then ideological disagreement by the respondent may be a consequence of recognition of a rhetorical style that the respondent has previously found unappealing. My choice of items for inclusion in the evaluation scale represents an attempt to register comments about style, not about substance; for example, a respondent can disagree with a speech and nevertheless find it rich in content, or agree with a speech and complain about the absence of specifics.

Although I believe that ideological agreement is at least partly a consequence of the rhetorical appeal of previous presentations of an ideology, in the 1993 experiment I nevertheless tried to control for the possibility that ideological agreement or disagreement was determining my results. In a closed questionnaire administered at the end of the interviews, I included an item asking the respondent "Do you share or not share the position of the author of this text?" and offering a choice among "basically I share it," "I share it in some ways, not in others," "basically I do not share it," and "it is hard to say." Table 3 shows the mean evaluations for three categories of respondent: respondents who do not share the position advocated in the speech, those who either share it partly or could not answer, and those who do share it.

Controlling for ideological agreement attenuates my results, as should be expected in view of the reduction of the number of persons in each cell as I split the sample. Clearly the differences in mean evaluation between respondents in the same row (those who agree and those who disagree) are much larger than the differences between respondents in the same column (who take the same positive or negative position but see speeches from different periods). Even so, when respondents express a firm ideological position for or against the speaker, the means for the combined democratic periods continue to exceed the means for the combined undemocratic periods, and this difference is significant at the .05 level. Only respondents who are ideologically neutral fail to react to the change in presentation.
### Table 3
Mean Evaluation by Answer to the Question: "Do You Share or Not Share the Position of the Author of the Text?" 1993 Only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
<th>Column 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ideological disagreement</td>
<td>Ideological neutrality</td>
<td>Ideological agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brezhnev and Early Gorbachev</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.71</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Gorbachev and Post Soviet</td>
<td>-3.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is there a statistically significant observation that the mean for the combined undemocratic periods is less than mean for the combined democratic periods?

| Column 1 | Ideological disagreement | F=5.01 | p=.014 | Yes |
| Column 2 | Ideological neutrality   |        |        | No  |
| Column 3 | Ideological agreement    | F=3.98 | p=.026 | Yes |

Do my results simply show that most Muscovites prefer more recent speeches to older ones? I note that individual respondents were capable of expressing negative evaluations of recent speeches or positive evaluations of older speeches. I also note that speeches from the early Gorbachev period are more recent than speeches from the Brezhnev era but were evaluated less favorably by my respondents in both years. However, I obviously cannot both (a) cue respondents with real, unedited speeches and (b) separate recency from the test variable.
democratic or undemocratic. As a control on the experiment, in 1993 I also showed a separate sample of Muscovites translations of articles from a U.S. newspaper about speeches by Soviet or Russian leaders (whose identification I deleted) in each of the four periods. The same interviewers asked the respondents the same questions, and the same coders used the same rules. Since U.S. newspapers use a different rhetoric from Russian political speeches, the control experiment tested whether rhetoric or recency was determining the evaluations. In the control experiment, the effect observed in the main experiment disappeared: although the respondents who saw the most recent newspaper report gave the most positive mean evaluation, no statistically significant differences emerged between the evaluations of the newspaper reports about the undemocratic periods and the evaluations of the newspaper reports about the democratic periods (F=0.01, p < .9275). Many of my respondents, moreover, realized that they were reading translations of foreign newspaper reports and complained about the alien style.

More evidence that the shift from undemocratic to democratic speech, rather than recency, is measured in the experiment comes from the emotionality of my respondents, which the detached tone appropriate for a social science report simply fails to convey. Post-Soviet speeches drew criticism but little anger. An example of a strong negative response in 1992 to speeches from the post-Soviet period was the statement about a speech of Yel’tsin’s: "There were no pleasing spots, positives. Negatives I found." In 1993 a strongly negative response to his speech proposing a new constitution read: "It is not concrete. To any one issue there ought to be proposed several solutions, which would express the opinion of all strata of the population, so that people could choose what suits them." The only speeches from the post-Soviet period which drew sharply negative responses were the two by the anti-democrats Rutskoi and Prokhanov.

The response to speeches from the undemocratic eras was quite different. In 1992, the Brezhnev-era speeches drew from one respondent the comment: "It set my teeth on edge" (a phrase found in several responses to the pre-1983 and 1986 texts, but not to the later ones). Another respondent blamed the speech for Russia’s condition today: "Twenty years we read that, twenty years we listened, and now for that we’re catching it... To say and write all that was immoral, and to read and listen was also immoral." A third called the text "ridiculous," "insulting," and "shameful." A fourth said, "I don’t consider myself stupid, but they were clever enough to turn my brains to powder...." A fifth said the speech evoked feelings of "offense," "annoyance," and "outrage." In 1993, the comments were more of the same: this speech, one person said, "pursues a completely definite goal of the latest round of making
fools of people and lulling them to sleep, and persuading them that without the Communist party they are like a little child without its mother." Another said, "To our generation, which survived all this, this is repugnant, nothing good."

Both in 1992 and in 1993, the 1986 speeches drew even more responses of equal intensity. "I would wish that no self-respecting person in a self-respecting society would read such texts ever in life." "I just have a hostile attitude toward this text." "I have a simple attitude. God forbid that any of that should recur. I don't want to shout 'hurrah' again. Our life today, of course, is hard. But I have no desire to dance again like a parrot to somebody else's tune." "I didn't read things like that earlier, thank God, and by my own choice I never will." "And when you hear these slogans again, well it's just like grasping for a second time a hot teapot." "It was very unpleasant to sink into that quagmire again." "Excuse me, I can't talk about this without tears." "It was revolting to read all that. It makes me wildly angry. I just skimmed it with a lot of tension, overcoming a very strong feeling of protest." "I think it's shameless to pronounce such speeches." "The text... is just an example of what we have, God grant, left behind and of what is now shameful to us.... I have a sharp reaction of revulsion." "On the one hand it's so ridiculous, and on the other, sad. The only thing I don't understand is why anybody would work on this now." "Fornicating with words" (slovobludie — a word used by several respondents). "The text annoys me, I never read anything like this, only once you very much implored me to." "Dog's horseradish" (a standard euphemism for an obscenity).

Many respondents retain the capacity for anger even when cued with speeches from as long as sixteen years ago. Their anger provides evidence to warrant the most troubling assumption necessary to this study: that audience responses to speeches of six, nine and even sixteen years' vintage can be meaningful. One might interpret the negativity shown by audiences toward the old speeches as simply a function of the speeches' being out of date. But the old speeches are fresh in the minds of contemporary Russians, and they make them mad. Rhetoric makes a difference in this reaction. While Muscovites probably become angry because the speeches awaken their memories of a terrible experience, by itself a reminder of the experience does not trigger this reaction. Muscovites cued in 1993 with translations of U.S. newspaper accounts display no significant difference in their likelihood of a negative reaction when the texts are taken from the undemocratic or democratic periods. Expressions of outrage comparable to those quoted above simply do not occur in the responses to the newspaper translations from the Brezhnev and early Gorbachev years.
Gorbachev, when he began glasnost', explicitly understood Russians' feelings about the regime's mode of address to them, and he relied on the change in popular response that I have found between the 1986 and 1989 speeches. In mid-1987 he told a convocation of journalists: “When you and we painted life in pink colors, the people saw it all and lost interest in the press and in public activity. They felt humiliated and insulted when such phony stuff was palmed off on them” (quoted in Gustafson 1988, 200).

Obscurity: To my surprise, in 1992 about the same number of the respondents (approximately a quarter) cued with speeches from each period described the speeches as difficult to remember or to understand. The lack of any change in explicit acknowledgement of unintelligibility raises the possibility that past commentators may have exaggerated the degree to which disenfranchised populations could not understand political statements expressed in the restricted code. In 1993 I tested this possibility by administering a closed questionnaire after the respondents had finished answering the open questions. Among the items in the closed questionnaire were two questions asking the respondents whether they definitely agreed, agreed more than disagreed, disagreed more than agreed, or definitely disagreed that the speech was "understandable, accessible" (poniatnyi, dostupnyi) and that it was "hard to remember" (nezapominaiushchii). Again, approximately a quarter of the respondents in every period disagreed that the speech was understandable or accessible. I also collected information on educational attainment; to my surprise, respondents were about equally likely to agree that a speech was accessible regardless of whether they reported elementary, incomplete secondary, secondary, or higher educations (although respondents with elementary educations numbered only thirteen of 240). This result suggests that with this item I measured the respondent's subjective sense of political literacy, not whether the respondent understood the speech.

Agreement that the speech was "hard to remember" was less evenly distributed. Table 4 shows the distribution among the four periods. The respondents shown speeches from the early Gorbachev years were far more likely to agree strongly with this statement than respondents shown any other speeches, and the difference in the responses when cued with early Gorbachev speeches from the responses to speeches from the two democratic periods is statistically significant ($F=6.25, p < .005$ for early vs. late Gorbachev; $F=17.21, p < .00005$ for early Gorbachev vs. post-Soviet). Also, the transition from less democratic to more democratic is nearly significant (late Gorbachev vs. post-Soviet, $F=2.72, p < .0504$). However, the responses when cued with democratic speeches are not significantly different from the responses when cued with the speeches from the Brezhnev era, and this finding consequently seems uninterpretable.
Table 4
Answers to 1993 Closed Question: "Could you say that the text you have read is hard to remember?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definitely Agree</th>
<th>Definitely Disagree</th>
<th>More than Disagree</th>
<th>More than Agree</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>Agree More than Disagree</th>
<th>More than Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brezhnev</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Gorbachev</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Gorbachev</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Soviet</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While these self-reports from the closed questionnaire seem uninterpretable, coding of the open responses displays a clear shift in the respondents' perception of differences among speakers in the same period. Respondents to all four periods spontaneously volunteered statements that speeches in that period were "all alike," that the texts were "clichéd," or that the speakers "transpose three words and talk." When cued with speeches from the two undemocratic periods, respondents frequently offered these comments; the comments became much rarer in response to the speeches from the two democratic eras. I coded the presence or absence of responses that the texts were stereotyped, and I performed a likelihood-ratio chi2 test on the resulting data shown in Table 5.

In the 1992 results the speeches from the two undemocratic periods are equally likely to evoke the response that speeches in that period were all alike, and the frequency of this response diminishes sharply when audiences are cued with speeches from the democratic periods. In contrast to respondents' evaluations, which differed less by period in 1993 than in 1992. In the 1993 data the difference between undemocratic and democratic periods in the frequency of responses that the speeches are stereotyped becomes even more strongly marked. If democracy is the right of mass audiences to choose among political programs advocated by
Table 5
Statements that the Speech is Stereotyped

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brezhnev</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Gorbachev</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Gorbachev</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Soviet</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1992: likelihood-ratio chi2(3)=16.1733 Pr = 0.001
1993: likelihood-ratio chi2(3)=35.9116 Pr = 0.000

competing candidates, then audiences’ confidence that they can distinguish among contents of political statements is a necessary prerequisite. In the 1992 experiment, there was evidence that Moscow audiences’ discernment of differences among the speakers had increased over the period 1986-1989. One text from 1986 and one text from 1989 were speeches by Gorbachev. In each group thirty respondents were cued with other speeches. At the end of the open questionnaires, respondents were asked whether they thought they could identify the speaker (whose name and title had been deleted from the text). Among the thirty in each group who saw texts of speeches by someone other than Gorbachev, the number who mistakenly attributed the texts to Gorbachev fell from nine in the 1986 group to zero in the 1989 group. By 1989 other speakers had become recognizably differentiated from Gorbachev, while politics in 1986 still seemed, in the words of one respondent, to be a "theater with one actor." Ironically, this respondent had just read a 1986 speech by Yeltsin. In 1993, however, the fifty respondents who saw a 1986 speech by someone other than Gorbachev were equally likely to mistakenly attribute the speech to Gorbachev as the fifty respondents who saw a 1989 speech by someone other than Gorbachev.

Often when asked to identify the speaker, but also sometimes independently, 1992 respondents volunteered a range of opinions on whether Gorbachev had developed a distinctive rhetorical style. A computer search of the texts of the responses for Gorbachev’s surname and a second search for his first name and patronymic found twenty respondents in the full sample who had commented on this question. Eleven said Gorbachev’s rhetoric was distinctive, while
ten said his style was no different from that of other communist orators. (One respondent voiced both opinions). Cued with a 1986 speech by the Politburo conservative Ligachev, one respondent said, "Gorbachev spoke otherwise, in a fresher way." Another, cued with a 1986 speech by the Politburo conservative Vorotnikov, asked, "Was this in Gorbachev's report? It isn't even like him, it's still Brezhnevite." A respondent cued with a 1986 speech by Gorbachev said, "This is obviously Gorbachev at the start of perestroika, about 1986, later the style of speeches changed." Espousing the viewpoint that Gorbachev had not changed the rhetorical style, another respondent cued with this speech said, "What muck (gadost').... [This is] just a little example of the literature of the stagnation era or the beginning of perestroika. The text is done in the spirit of the stagnation period, it's evident he's only just beginning here, Gorbachev." Another agreed. "We heard such speeches from Khrushchev on." And one cued by Yeltsin's 1986 speech responded, "Empty noise. In general, if this is Gorbachev, he always talks a lot and in essence says nothing."

Of course, the very existence in 1992 of diverse opinions about whether Gorbachev had a distinctive style, and the suggestions that his speeches became more distinctive over time, diverge sharply from the uniformity of twenty-nine statements, with no contrary opinions, that speeches before 1983 were indistinguishable.

4. Discussion

Moscow audiences could have reacted with indifference to the old and new speeches. Some individuals cued with speeches from the democratic period did duplicate the responses of other individuals cued with old ones. These duplicative responses across cues prove the existence of a real alternative to the results of this study. Thus the study fails to reject the hypothesis that restrictive speech practices characteristic of undemocratic leaders insult Moscow subjects and make politics obscure to them, while it does reject (within the limits set by the assumptions and procedure of the study) the null hypothesis that the Moscow population was indifferent to the transition from undemocratic to democratic speech. I have shown that the phenomenon is reproducible despite the sharply changed political circumstances from relative quiescence in October 1992 to combat in the streets in October 1993.

Our results also reproduce previous findings by other scholars of substantial support for democracy among Russians. This replication is particularly telling because I used a different procedure involving real political cues rather than stimuli designed by the investigator and an open rather than a closed questionnaire. Because of sampling problems I am uncertain, but it would appear that support for democracy in Moscow had diminished from October 1992 to
October 1993, and this diminution gives some clues to the democrats' defeat in the December 1993 elections.

Of course this experimental procedure cannot control for the effect of historical circumstances on popular responsiveness to democratic rhetoric. I cannot disprove the possibility that in different historical circumstances, Russians might have evaluated communist speeches positively and democratic speeches negatively. Experiments can only be conducted in the historical circumstances in which we find ourselves, and I would be surprised if politicians like Gorbachev and Yeltsin had abandoned their previous communist rhetoric in historical circumstances propitious to continuing it. The historical cases of democratizing rhetoric coupled with failure to achieve democracy leave no doubt that rhetorical change alone is not enough. However, I do note that Gorbachev and Yeltsin had a choice. They could have continued to speak in the old way that Moscow audiences find demeaning and indistinct, and they did choose instead to make available a political language which Moscow citizens evaluate much more favorably and in which they perceive for the first time meaningful political alternatives. Without claiming that rhetorical change causes democratization independently of circumstances, I would interpret my findings as showing that democratization is disadvantaged in the absence of rhetorical change.

A particularly noteworthy feature of the data is the failure of democratic rhetoric to evoke more universal enthusiasm. A number of those cued with old speeches volunteered the comment that contemporary speeches were no different, and although positive reactions enter the responses of those cued with new speeches, they remain outnumbered by the negatives. The biggest differences lie between the relative calm with which audiences greet speeches in the democratic period (even those they dislike) and the active hostility of their reaction to undemocratic ones. The old speech, they said, treated them as fools; in Russian democracy the language of politics becomes less noticeable because it is no longer offensive to the audience. Yeltsin drew criticism from some respondents for failing to change his rhetoric enough.

The transition in contemporary Russian attitudes toward political speech from indignation to calm criticism recapitulates a development in the early United States. In American English today, the sentence "that's just rhetoric" dismisses words as inconsequential, but at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the same sentence was an expression of popular anger, a rebuff to the pretentious speech of self-proclaimed social betters (Cmiel 1990, 39-49). As it ceases to be an object of attention, political language becomes less a screen in front of, and more a window on, politics. Undemocratic elites keep people out of politics by using a stilted rhetoric that conceals disagreements and denies the capability of the ordinary citizen to make
political choices. By breaking the rules, the democratizing politician not only informs the public of a schism within the ruling ranks but also alerts the people to the possibility that their own speech can reconstitute a new, more inclusive polity. Whether a politician's language seems to offer an unobstructed view of the politician's program is crucial, of course, to citizens' belief that they know how to evaluate their electoral choices.

REFERENCES


