

Impact case study (REF3b)

<p>Institution: University of Warwick</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: Sociology</p>
<p>Title of case study: Shaping public understanding of and creating new audiences for post-socialist punk</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) This research explored the political significance of punk in post-socialist Eastern Europe. It created a publicly available cultural artefact, RottenBeat, an electronic resource which presents high quality analysis and information on contemporary music scenes in the former USSR, Central, and South Eastern Europe, as well as searchable and accessible archives of audio, textual and visual materials. It supported new forms of artistic expression by bringing academics, journalists, artists and musicians into dialogue with each other thereby changing their understandings of punk and contributing to public debate about the need to protect human rights in Russia.</p> <p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) The research was carried out between 2009-13 by an international, collaborative team of researchers from the UK, Russia, Estonia and Croatia led by Hilary Pilkington PI (Professor at Warwick until September 2012) and including Ivan Gololobov (2009-2013 at Warwick). It consisted of a multi-sited ethnography across 5 field sites in post-socialist Europe: St Petersburg, Krasnodar, Vorkuta (Russia), Halle (Germany), and Pula (Croatia). Members of the research team included Benjamin Perasovic (Croatia) and Yngvar Steinholt (Norway – visiting fellow Warwick 2010).</p> <p>Post-socialist punk is an important contemporary cultural phenomenon with significant social and political implications, as became globally evident with the Pussy Riot protests. The research explored what leads people to get involved with radical, non-commercial and politically unsafe music and what this involvement means to them as individuals, to the society they live in, and for punk as a global scene.</p> <p>The study found that punk is differentiated from other subcultures by its active challenging of the norms and social rules governing everyday life. This challenge is a key element of its identity and is enacted differently according to social location and shifting forms of political engagement. In Russia, punk tends to symbolise aesthetic and artistic challenges. Its opponents are the state, police, and territorial gangs while other subcultural groups are considered allies in its confrontation with the oppressive mainstream. In Germany it addresses the construction of alternative economies and opposes itself to the state and mainstream society. In Croatia it is associated with alternative social spaces; punk is an attitude and way of life which challenges the normativity of dominant nationalist discourses. Motivations for joining the subcultural punk scene are complex and reflect these different contexts.</p> <p>Researchers found an element of imitation and mimicry in all the punk scenes studied, however its meaning differs according to changing perceptions of and relations to the ‘West’. In Germany Anglophone punk is understood as a sign of a progressive alternative; in Croatia it is seen as a language of radical opposition and, in Russia, the aesthetics of Western punk are generally adopted as an artistic alternative but, at the same time, they are reworked to provide a connection to the local and national context, and to secure the artistic independence of the musicians. There are also different degrees of group cohesion and different attitudes towards the political, commercial and cultural mainstream in the different research sites: in Croatia and Germany punk tends to be explicitly political and visible in its stylistic and subcultural attributes while in Russia the identity of the group as a whole tends to be fluid and circumstantial, constructed around events rather than intra-group affiliations.</p> <p>Punk in the post-socialist context re-arranges the scale of reference used in Western punk and attaches different meanings to the practices and symbols used in the West. All this not only extends our understanding of punk but also enriches our understanding of a cultural practice of protest, resistance, and revolt, which is often aesthetic, symbolic and ironic, and its relation to</p>

direct action and structural opposition in the context of post-socialist Europe.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Pilkington, H. (ed.) (2012) 'Punk - but not as we know it: Punk in post-socialist space'. Guest editorship of special issue of *Punk and Post-Punk*, (Intellect Press) 1(3). This special issue includes articles by Pilkington, Steinholt, Gololobov, Perasovic and Ventzel

Perasović, Benjamin (2012), 'Pogo on the terraces: Perspectives from Croatia' in *Punk and Post Punk* (Intellect Press), Vol. 1, No.3. pp. 285-303 [peer-reviewed] DOI 10.1386/punk.1.3.285_1

Pilkington, Hilary (2012), "Mutants of the 67th parallel north': Punk performance and the transformation of everyday life' in *Punk and Post Punk* (Intellect Press), Vol. 1, No.3. pp. 323-342[peer-reviewed] DOI 10.1386/punk.1.3.323_1

Steinholt, Yngvar (2012), 'Punk is punk but by no means punk: Definition, genre dodging and the quest for an authentic voice in contemporary Russia' in *Punk and Post Punk* (Intellect Press), Vol. 1, No.3. pp. 267-284 [peer-reviewed] DOI 10.1386/punk.1.3.267_1

Gololobov, Ivan (2012), 'There are no atheists in trenches under fire: Orthodox Christianity in Russian punk' in *Punk and Post Punk* (Intellect Press), Vol. 1, No.3. pp. 305-321 [peer-reviewed] DOI 10.1386/punk.1.3.305_1

Research Grants

'Post-socialist punk: Beyond the double irony of self-abasement' (2009-2013) AHRC grant [ref: AH/G011966/] awarded to Hilary Pilkington (PI). Total project costs: £596,546.93 (contribution from AHRC £436,777.54)

'Rottenbeat: academic and musical dialogue with new Russian punk' (2011), CEELBAS workshop and network grant awarded to Hilary Pilkington (lead applicant) and Ivan Gololobov (co-applicant). Grant award: £5,850.

Undergraduate Research Support Scheme, University of Warwick (2010). Grant awarded to Gabija Didziokaite (applicant – Ivan Gololobov). Grant £1,000.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The research created a publicly available cultural artefact, RottenBeat (www.rottenbeat.com) in Spring 2009. This is a web-resource which streams the music of territorially and linguistically isolated scenes, making their music available to English speakers and enabling musicians to promote their work internationally. Its main objective was to 'translate' the culture of post-socialist punk into the languages of potential audiences, and to combine accounts from the research sites with academic, journalistic, and media accounts. RottenBeat averages 4,166 views a month, approximately 90% of which are external to Warwick.

The research team **supported new forms of artistic expression**. As well as creating RottenBeat it provided opportunities for live performance which enabled post-socialist punk bands to bring their music to international audiences. Over a hundred musicians participated in the research with two of the bands putting on live performances in the UK. For many, it was the first time English-speaking audiences had been able to appreciate the views and music of these artists. One of the participants from Saint Petersburg explained that he wanted 'people abroad to know that Russia is not only about Putin, Abramovich, oil, and mafia, but that here there are also people like us, who are fighting'.

The project provided a new platform for previously 'undiscovered', non-commercial underground music and art to an English speaking audience. Some of the bands and performers participating in the research were invited to project workshops where they were able to perform their music and to discuss it with British peers, journalists and other interested people. This had not previously happened and was the first time the voices of Russian punk musicians were heard by an English

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speaking audience. One of the workshops led to much wider coverage of the group, Zverstvo. The project invited Zverstvo, a provincial avant-punk band from Krasnodar, Russia, to London in May 2011 to take part in a workshop, 'RottenBeat: Academic and Music Dialogue with New Russian Punk', organised in collaboration with Pushkin House. As a result of this visit the band attracted substantial media attention in Russia. In 2012 they were reviewed by Artemiy Troitsky, the most prominent musical critic in Russia (<http://finam.fm/archive-view/5766/>), and one of their songs, which had been recorded live in London, was included as one of the best songs in the official 'playlist of 2012' by Afisha.ru, the central Russian internet portal devoted to contemporary Russian popular culture. It was referred to as the 'refrain of the year – as illogical, absurd, straightforward and unavoidable as the last 12 months' (http://www.afisha.ru/article/best2012_songs/). The project also contributed to an exhibition of politically engaged artists in London such as Nikolai Kopeikin, the leader of the art-collective KOLKHUi (<http://www.pushkinhouse.org/single-exhibition/items/kopeikin-meets-london>). Gololobov was a member of the organising committee and the project team organised an introductory workshop on the day of the official opening. These activities give additional credibility and status to artists' and musicians' work at home, and more space and security to create where they live.

Impact through media profile

On the basis of the experience and expertise gained during the project, Gololobov was invited to be a freelance author and content supplier for the new Calvert Journal, A Guide to Creative Russia, to be published in London from 2013 onwards. This online magazine attracts over 1000 readers per day, from across the UK, the US, Europe and the world, appealing to those interested in Russian art and culture (see section 5). His article considers the provisional phenomenon of Russian punk, in particular relation to Zverstvo, a provincial band that produces its own version of punk. Since its publication in mid-July, the article has been read over 300 times.

In 2012 Gololobov was consulted in the aftermath of the Pussy Riot protest in Russia when two members of the female punk band, Pussy Riot, were arrested. The expertise of the researchers has been drawn on in media discussion of Pussy Riot, their relation to the underground music scene and the human rights issues raised by their detention. Gololobov contributed to the debate on human rights issues in Russia, being interviewed for various Russian media programmes. He was also interviewed and prepared a fact sheet for *Nature* on the case of a Russian chemist who was imprisoned for her scientific views and who shared a cell with a member of Pussy Riot. The article which resulted (see section 5) followed the publication of an online interview with Gololobov which was extensively cited by the Russian media. By raising the profile of the Russian chemist's case, this coverage helped to secure her release on bail, and significantly contributed to raising awareness of the human rights situation in Russia.

The research has attracted considerable media attention (see section 5); it has engaged the public by means of public lectures, a series of talks on Post-Socialist Punk published on iTunes, and has an entry in Wikipedia.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Reports of the project's findings in the **non-academic music media** (UK):

- The NME report (Russian Jazz Punk THE ZVERSTVO video Live gig by Russian avant-garde jazz punk band THE ZVERSTVO, at The Fish and the Fury, The Others N16 London, on 3rd May 2011 as part of the project workshop) 'The Zverstvo gig organised in the framework of RottenBeat: Academic and Musical Dialogue with New Russian Punk' is available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qaMwxizrGQ>

UK media:

- "Culture clash: punk takes on provincialism in Krasnodar", I. Gololobov, Calvert Journal <http://calvertjournal.com/comment/show/1225/punk-takes-on-provincialism-in-krasnodar>
- 'Research campaign to free jailed Russian chemist' *Nature* article citing Gololobov, <http://www.nature.com/news/researchers-campaign-to-free-jailed-russian-chemist-1.11469>
- BBC ("Rock studies? There is such a science!" Interview for the 5th floor, BBC Russian service, May 14, 2011, (in Russian - available at:

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http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/society/2011/05/110519_rock_music_science.shtml);

- Voice of Russia (After Member's Release, What does The Future of Pussy Riot Look Like? Afternoon Show on The Voice of Russia, Oct 11, 2012 15:50 Moscow Time (http://voiceofrussia.com/us/radio_broadcast/70924886/90978067/)

Russian media:

- the Russian media picked up the story from *Nature* (see: <http://lenta.ru/news/2012/09/22/nature/>)

References can be sought from:

Ex-director of Pushkin House, a charity for Russian culture in London (collaboration in frames of the Underground Russia, RottenBeat: Academic and Musical Dialogue with New Russian Punk, and other dissemination events)

Observer at BBC Russian (presenter and chair at RottenBeat: Academic and Musical Dialogue with New Russian Punk, and author of the BBC reports)

Content administrator for RottenBeat is able to report on the project's impact on audiences.

The editor of Punk and Post-Punk journal is able to confirm the project's impact on performers and their audiences