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Inheriting & Re-imagining Rights: Assessing References to a Soviet Past amongst Young Women in Neoliberal and Neo-conservative Russia

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An abundance of research examines the resonance and relevance of the Soviet past in contemporary Russia, engaging with the frames of nostalgia and collective memory. There is also a vibrant field of youth studies that explores how collective memory projects and inheritances of this past shape young people's current and imagined futures (Krupets et al, 2016). However, there is less research asking why younger, non-activist, women – coming of age, or born, in the 1990s – continue to make references to a Soviet 'past'. This chapter bridges and contributes to these research fields by analysing when discussions of a Soviet past featured in interviews with young women about their rights and political engagements. Focusing largely on 'naturally occurring' passing references to Soviet past/s across a range of projects, this chapter provides greater insights into which aspects of pasts are being inherited and reimagined on a daily basis and how they are then used in young women's own citizenship ideals and future imaginaries. The interviews cited in this chapter were conducted in a provincial Russian city between 2005 and 2014. This time span captures an evolving Russian social, economic and political context that is particularly vexing for young women variously situated within ongoing economic difficulties, deepening neo-conservatism, and global narratives of neoliberal personhood. The chapter shows how inherited memories of Soviet rights and citizenship are being transmitted, but also disrupted, in daily intergenerational interactions in the family. The ambiguities and ambivalences apparent in young women's inherited memories of a Soviet past reveals a re-imagined and idealised Soviet social citizenship, that is seen as both emancipatory and restrictive in its expectations of, and effects on, women.

Inheritances and imaginaries of the Soviet in post-Soviet Russia

A developing body of research explores the role of increasingly politicised collective memories of the Soviet for young people, particularly in relation to youth patriotism (Hement, 2014; Sperling, 2015). This chapter builds on this, but turns attention to the intimate and everyday intergenerational spaces of non-activist young women. Through this focus, the chapter explores how collective memory projects are engaged with, resisted, and reworked in young women's own visions of their futures (see also Merck et al, 2016). The argument follows from Marianne Hirsch and Valerie Smith's call for a greater engagement within the study of collective memory, nostalgia and inherited memory with feminist analyses to 'analyze and document the practices of private everyday experience, recognizing that they are as politically revealing in their own way as any event played out in the public arena' (2002, p. 12). As Hirsch & Smith (2002) point out 'cultural memory is the product of fragmentary personal and collective experiences articulated through technologies and media that shape even as they transmit memory' (drawing on Connerton, 1989, p. 39, cited p.5).

There is a lively literature explaining why the Soviet – and the social life of socialism (Berdahl, 2008) – lives on as a collective memory project and in the form of nostalgia. For Svetlana Boym (2008: 13), nostalgia can be understood as restorative (attempting to reconstruct a loss) and as reflective (focusing on ambivalences and contradictions). Nostalgia as an industry, or, as Boym (2008: 10) states 'a global epidemic' of nostalgia can be understood as the re-circulation of images and products from the 'golden age' of the 1960s and 1970s Brezhnevian social contract, of rising living standards and consumer and leisure culture (Mazur, 2015), live on through popular culture in Russia. The advance of online sharing technologies and social networking (Kaprans, 2015) has also enabled a revising of past cultural products for a new generation through revisiting and re-circulating Soviet films, childhood animations, and music. Moreover, local formations the global 'hipster' trend for vintage and mid-century modern have formations in Russia via kitsch, flea markets and retro restaurants (Yurchak, 2008). The popularity of these past forms can be explained in fairly objective terms and as not necessarily specific to Russia or Soviet nostalgia. People like to look back to and reanimate the happiest parts of their childhood in making sense of their understanding of where they have come from and where they are now. There is a growing global trend for ge-

nealogy, which is also reflected in Russia as Inna Leykin (2015) outlines. Yet, as Leykin shows, for some Russian citizens, the distinction from other places is that genealogy is also used to address traumatic pasts and present problems.

This chapter speaks to existing analyses of ‘Soviet nostalgia’ by exploring how collective memory projects play out in dealing with traumatic pasts that are increasingly temporally ‘distant’ to a ‘post-Soviet’ generation - those born after the collapse with no lived experience of the Soviet experiment - and may not be recalled & labeled in terms of trauma. Yet, as the interviews show collective memories of Soviet pasts remain emotionally, socially and politically proximate and resonate and reverberate through contemporary life. For young women, those born or coming of age after the end of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, a complex socio-economic and political and cultural terrain has shaped a sense of self and citizenship. Since 2012, and in the aftermath of the crackdown on political opposition post-Pussy Riot, there has been a political repackaging of selected elements of the past.

This is particularly clear in how the role of the USSR in WWII is invoked in new collective memory projects to underpin current geopolitical realities, not least in relation to the conflict in Ukraine. A distinctly gendered, hyper-masculine (Woods, 2016), branding of citizenship based on a conceptualisation of patriotism over citizenship that emphasises ‘traditional’ family values and roles is now evident in Russia in public discourse and in policy moves (see also Krupets et al, 2017). Running alongside is the ramping up of a pro-natalist - and anti-choice - agenda re-positioning women as future mothers. While there are echoes of Soviet pronatalism, there is also collision with ideals of neoliberal personhood, subjectivities and narratives of ‘choice’ (Salmenniemi and Adamson, 2014), with the material constraints of the economic crisis and the anti-choice of neo-conservatism. This makes for a particularly limiting space for women to be full citizens.

The argument in this chapter thus speaks to critical analyses of Soviet nostalgia that problematise a straight-forward positive recalling of a past for an unsatisfactory present. I argue that younger women’s references to the past do not only represent an imagined positive past, or a lament for loss, but don’t necessarily frame the present as wholly negative. Thus, as Boym shows in her work on forms of nostalgia in Russia, ‘nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one’s own fantasy’ (2008: 7) based in ‘the relationship between individual biography and the biography of groups and nations, between personal and collective memory’ (p. 9). I return to the theorisation of collective memory below. Moreover, as Anton Popov and Dusan Deak (2015, p. 45) argue, we need to be mindful of

how ‘nostalgia is articulated and rationalized in different ways’. For Vanessa May (2017), albeit writing about ‘nostalgia from afar’ amongst older people, we need to complicate understandings of what nostalgia does. May argues that nostalgia can also ‘be a critical intervention ... a form of questioning and challenging contemporary conditions and ideologies that is both “melancholic and utopian”’ (also citing Pickering and Knightley, 2006, p. 921, on p. 404). While this chapter focuses on the reception and re-interpretation of inherited memories by younger women, it is important not to lose sight of how the memories of a Soviet past that are being inherited are themselves also shifting and reflect the ongoing reimagining of a lived past over and through time.

This chapter not only draws on the critical framings of nostalgia in how this plays out in intergenerational and the intimate spaces, but is also mindful of Maurice Halbwach’s theorisation of the individual and the collective. Particularly useful here is his work on how collective memory - the argument that all memories are social, relational and intergenerational - is also formed within the family. As ‘each family member recollects in his [in this case her] own manner the common familial past’ (1992: 54). Thus, our own memories and inheritances are always shaped - even when in opposition - to the ‘shared same daily life’ (1992: 54). Paul Connerton (1989: 36) in his discussion of Halbwachs and social memory highlights how the ‘membership of a social group’ shapes how we understand who we are as we ‘appeal to memory in order to reply to questions others put to us, or which we imagine that they could ask us, and in order to reply to them, we envisage ourselves as forming part of the same group or groups that they do’. These contributions to understandings of collective memory are particularly pertinent in informing the analysis in this chapter given the ways in which women are structured in inter-generational homes and constellations of relations with women - particularly where there are caring responsibilities that create commonly shared experiences between mothers, daughters and grandchildren (see also Utrata, 2015).

Thus, it is crucial to expand the analyses of collective memory projects in an exploration of how the gendered nature of citizenship is intermeshing with the highly gendered individual and personal narratives that young women are encountering and ‘inheriting’ daily in their intergenerational interactions in the homeⁱ, the workplace, and in daily routine life administration. This is a contingent and ambiguous inheritance that not only reveals resistance to older generations’ views and experiences, but also empathy in trace values that are prospectively applied forward to future imagined lives. This chapter explores the possible connections to be made through an analysis of passing references to a ‘Soviet’ past in interviews

with young women with existing theorisations of inherited memories and young women's imagined futures. By focusing on different research projects spanning the period of 2005-2014, this chapter aims to show how these processes of reimagining may be working inter-generationally and highlights areas for further research.

Inherited memories and future citizenship imaginaries in neoliberal and neoconservative times

In her conceptualisation of post-memory developed from her research with second-generation Holocaust survivors, Hirsch argues for the need to examine the 'family is a space of transmission and the function of gender as the idiom of remembrance' (2008, p. 104). This is particularly pertinent in Russia where the trauma and violence of the Soviet past is unresolved and being re-written in public discourse. To say that Russia is an interesting space for understanding the role of inherited memories is an understatement. Yet, much of the theoretical and conceptual work to date focuses on how collective memories about 'difficult' or traumatic pasts are inherited by subsequent generations. Russia clearly has a difficult past and Leykin's (2016) study of genealogy as therapy mentioned earlier attests to the ways in which some Russian citizens attempt to come to terms with these memories in the absence of state commitment to transitional justice. There has been much attention given to the apparent 'rehabilitation' of elements of Stalinism and mis/remembering of Soviet atrocities in contemporary Russia and the implications this has for not dealing with trauma and violations (Sherlock, 2016, p. 1). As Boym argues (2008: 10) 'the mix of nostalgia and politics can be explosive' when this is non-reflective and devoid of responsibility for the harms of the past. However, Emily Keightley and Michael Pickering (2012) conceptualize a 'mnemonic imagination' to outline how young people learn from, re-interpret, and in cases *resist*, inherited interpretations and presentations of the past. Indeed, my research shows that there is also the need to engage with the transmission of inherited memories that are not framed as personally traumatic, even if they are embedded in wider memories of trauma.

Inherited memories also have a role in imagining futures. Based in their long-standing research on Russian youth cultures, Elena Omel'chenko and Guzel Sabirova (2016, p. 253) argue that young people in Russia experience immersion in Soviet reality, 'not only as a his-

torical period when their parents and ancestors lived, but also as a symbolic presence of this Soviet reality in contemporary life'. They argue that Soviet life has 'survived' and is being 'revived' as young people engage in the values of collectivism and sacrifice that marked desirable Soviet personhood. Julie Hemment (2014) in her ethnography of youth patriotism also discusses how this bricolage of idealised reimagining of a Soviet value system and conformity are working alongside neoliberal values of entrepreneurship, self-reliance and responsibility. This produces a collective memory in young people that is 'idealistic, sketchy and contradictory' (Omel'chenko and Sabirova, 2016, p. 261). Valeria Kasamara and Anna Sokorina (2015; 2017) make similar observations in their studies: young people have both positive and negative associations with the Soviet period depending on how optimistic or pessimistic they are about the future and how these views relate to how they position themselves in relation to the state.

Young women are also positioned between inherited pasts and a neoconservative and neoliberal present in gendered ways. These produce conditions that situate women ambiguously as both consumers and potential mothers, with the possibility of greater freedoms, but yet a sense that their lives and ambitions may not be realised. Valerie Sperling (2012) has outlined how gendered differences impact on roles among patriotic youth and Ekaterina Kalini-na's (2017) analysis of the role of nostalgia driven patriotic fashion shows how women are the targets of 'patriotic glamour' consumption. These public collective projects exist alongside - and shape - the personal and intimate lives in the gendered nature of intergenerational relations. As work in other contexts shows, young women are not only subject to their own imagined futures, but also that of the state and family expectations too (Patel, 2017). As early marriage and a discourse of motherhood as female destiny remains prevalent in Russia, and especially so in provincial areas (see Kosterina, 2012), exploring what inherited memories 'do' for young woman's understanding of their personal, social, political and economic presents and futures is a key area for exploration.

Being a young post-Soviet women: reflections from re-searching everyday rights and political engagements in provincial Russia 2005- 2014

This chapter is rooted in my long-standing research focusing on how women understand and use their rights in post-Soviet Russia. This research has spanned over a decade. The first major piece of research in this long-standing project was conducted over 6 months of fieldwork in 2005 in the city of Ulyanovsk. Ulyanovsk is a medium sized city located within European Russia within the Volga region. It lies approximately 800 km south of Moscow and has experienced similar issues with economic transition as other provincial cities in Russia (for greater discussion of the research location, see Stella et al, 2012). This chapter draws on 14 of the interviews conducted in 2005 with women then aged 18-30 (birth years 1975-1991). The chapter then compares this with further interviews conducted in Ulyanovsk in 2013 and 2014 as part of two smaller projects exploring women's use of online spaces in rights claimsⁱⁱ and political engagementsⁱⁱⁱ. This chapter draws on 5 interviews from 2013 and 6 from 2014. The women in the 2013 and 2014 samples were aged between 19-30 (birth years across these 2 projects spanning 1983- 1997)^{iv}.

The chapter includes discussion of interviews from as far back as 2005 in order to contrast between a time when the Soviet period was in closer temporal proximity - in terms of both lived and inherited memories. Moreover, 2005 was a significant year in the changing of a Soviet social contract as the project of monetisation of in-kind benefits (Wengle and Russell, 2008; Hemment, 2009) was being implemented - women were living the rewriting of the Soviet social contract via their roles as (prospective) carers, which was brought into stark relief in the interviews. As such, the 2005 project featured several direct questions inviting respondents to reflect on whether things were 'better or worse than during Soviet times'.

As well as a shifting political context, the occupations of the women interviewed also reveal a fast changing socio-economic context. In the 2005 project, participants had, or were in the process of obtaining a higher or specialist education, and were trained to work in professions such as teaching, librarianship, medicine, science, journalism and the arts. However, not all women occupied these positions as a result of lack of jobs and/or low pay across these sectors, hit hardest in the post-Soviet economic transformations. As a result many women worked in the private sector or were self employed (see Turbine, 2007 for full details). Discussions of access to employment and a good life were a key theme in the interviews in 2005 - for women of all ages. The role of inherited memories in shaping younger women's understanding of their own rights was also clear as participants' reflected on how their mothers and grandmothers experiences of work, family and leisure were distinctive ow-

ing to their Soviet education, employment and structuring of family life. For example, Lida^v a 19 year old student, said:

If you take my Mum, or Gran, then they were brought up in completely different circumstances and those circumstances were in the Soviet Union – they had a completely different upbringing. For me it has a meaning because I was brought up by my own mum and her own prejudices and stereotypes, based on what has been... and here in the provinces old prejudices and stereotypes hold sway...the atmosphere for women, for girls is very difficult – no one is interested in what is going on in your head... I was born in 1985 at the time when perestroika was just beginning, so in principle I cannot remember that ideology of the Soviet times – I can't remember. When I started school, I already knew that there would be no Pioneers, Oktiabrist^{vi}, nothing like that. Well, of course my parents showed me because they were born in that system, they were raised like that... so now what we consider normal, they think is bad. In our country we have nothing, before they were building communism, and now we, we, well young people have no money. It's a real shame...

While Lida made a distinction between her life and the lives learned about through inherited memories and upbringing, references to the Soviet in 2005 also revealed 3 ways of reimagining a past. For some, this was not nostalgic, it was as 'a totalitarian system', but for others it was viewed as a loss of welfare provision for women as well as a source of the values of collectivity and social justice. Participants spoke not only how a difficult material present and lack of future prospects that are characterised in discussions of nostalgia, but this was both juxtaposed with an idealised imaginary of a social welfare system enjoyed by their grand/mothers and versions of a past that were more critical. Alina, a student in her early twenties, when asked whether rights were significant in her daily life, revealed how a positive reimagining of social welfare and social justice were inter-twined with an imagining of Soviet times. These were not experienced directly, but have been passed through intergenerational understandings of loss of social citizenship norms:

Well, now rights are already, how can you say. Well, in the Soviet times, people could feel proud, at that time people were part of something, as a society, like a family, well I don't know how to explain it, now people if they have influence then they are fine, but if you are in a lower social position or fall on hard times, then you are not seen as a person at all, although what that person needs is understanding, some assistance.

However, the narratives of 2005 also revealed the emergence of a neoliberal self who felt the promise of the market and of new rhetorics and realities of ‘choice’ especially for young women (Cronin, 2000; 2002). In addition, there was evidence of an ambivalence towards the idealised welfare state of the past for women. Some women interviewed in 2005 problematised this association of women’s rights interests as driven by maternity and childcare and questioned the myth that the Soviet state did look after women. Anya, a software designer in her late 20s said:

Our women work, always have. In the USSR that was the case. You gave birth, the child went straight away into day-care, and you went to work. Constantly.

Thus, ‘Soviet times’ were not seen as an aspirational past by all, even if the difficulties for women with children attempting to balance work and children and their own sense of self were viewed as more difficult in the present and imagined future. The 2005 interviews also revealed the development of women’s distinctive post-Soviet identities and future citizenship imaginaries – in terms of how their lives would be distinct from their mothers. These inheritances and reimagining revealed both reflective and restorative nostalgia as outlined by Svetlana Boym (2008). The sense of loss running through the narratives was prevalent - a loss of social welfare, loss of sociality, and loss of the values of solidarity. These were not only understood in terms of loss for the individual and collective at large, but for their parents and grandparents - the women’s everyday relational others. The extent to which these inheritances of loss continue post-2012 is explored in the following sections that show how ‘loss’ narratives now also interplay with renewed public and collective patriotism projects in ambiguous ways.

Tracing inherited memories of a Soviet past in young women’s mediated lives: reimagining past and future citizenship?

2012 can be viewed as a game-changing year marking the upsurge in Russia’s gendered neo-conservative patriotism after the Pussy Riot case (Turbine, 2015b; Sperling, 2015). By 2014, as the conflict in Ukraine escalated, discourses and policy moves emphasising patriotism, conformity and collective imaginaries of ‘greatness’ played out in public and private. In this section, the focus is on how young women living through this time engaged and made sense of both collective and individual inherited memories about the Soviet past within intimate and

intergenerational relations. In the 2013 and 2014 interviews, these changes were evidenced in the changing educational and professional backgrounds of the participants with degrees in new areas such as marketing, legal studies, and advertising featuring (alongside older gendered forms of professional training, like teaching). Similarly, women who were working were more often employed in the private sector in retail, leisure, computing, design, finance, and the beauty industry, again reflecting the changing economic landscape and embeddedness of global forms of work for young people in Russia, even if these are not available locally for all.

In 2013, as part of a project exploring the role of the Internet in everyday rights claims, women participating in interviews were asked what online spaces they used, and what they used them for as an opening discussion. While the focus was on women's own present lived experiences, references to the Soviet past featured in these discussions and it is worth further exploration of how and why. This is of particular interest when considering the dominant theme across these interviews was one of generational difference - with young women viewing their lives as not only 'online' but this as a signal of 'getting on' in life. Women interpreted their adaptation via the use of the internet by seeking out and sourcing 'non-state' information, in carving out peer spaces to talk about rights and politics for new times, as well as a way to do daily life administration in a more efficient and effective way.

An interview with Veronika, a student in her early twenties, began with a discussion of her use of the Internet at home in amateur genealogy work, searching for information about her grandfather who went missing in WWII (see also Leykin, 2016). While references to the Soviet past are clearly understandable in this example, references to the Soviet past continued through the interview as Veronica began discussing another daily use of the internet relating to the problems she had experienced with the renewal of her passport. She explained:

About three years ago, I had a very difficult time. I had to renew my passport. I was temporarily registered with my relatives here. There were issues with my birth certificate because it had a kind of stamp 'citizenship acquired', as I understand it when the Soviet Union collapsed, all kids got this, there was no more USSR - Russia now existed, so we would get citizenship. I think I got the new stamp in 1994 or something, maybe here, I don't remember where from. I was living in in another city previously when I got my first passport and I had no problems up until this point, all my documents were deemed fine... I handed in my old passport for the renewal and started to get all these phone calls saying I was going to be

stripped of my citizenship and lose my residency permit – all this kind of stuff. I was so surprised, what do you mean? I was born here in Russia, lived here all my life. So I appealed to the Human Rights Ombudsman on the advice from the Children's rights Ombudsman office here.

While Veronika obtained a resolution to her case – albeit after a stressful appeal to the Federal Ombudsman – this prompted a reflection in the interview about broader points of dissatisfaction with the unworkability of elements of bureaucratized life. These are implicitly linked to the Soviet past through talk of 'old ways' and explicitly linked to the USSR through the lived implications of changes to citizenship criteria. Getting everyday life administration done was a key theme in interviews in 2013, with participants also discussing the ease of making a GP appointment online. Yana, a leisure services worker in her mid-twenties, said this was beneficial in practical terms for avoiding queues, again bringing in the trope of difference from a 'past' implicitly read as Soviet by reference to an older generations' preference for waiting in line and working through 'pointless' bureaucracy:

I'm young and my generation is online, I can learn [how to use the appointments service] and schedule an appointment easily. But then I thought about my grandmother, how could she schedule an appointment online? She couldn't do it herself and she wouldn't want me to do it; she's very conservative and says she'll go down and wait in line. There is no convincing her... so it looks to me like these people [older, with old habits] have fewer rights, so to speak, because they can't access this easier way of making an appointment.

Another way in which the contested inheritance of Soviet was revealed was in the discussions of the multiple consequences of living in an intergenerational household. Nadia, another woman interviewed in 2013, approaching her mid-twenties and working in retail spoke implicitly throughout her interview about how the internet in her intergenerational household was re-shaping understandings of citizenship for themselves, but also their relations with one another - resolving different starting points and values. Nadia recounted how use of the Internet had provided an opportunity to spend time with her grandfather who had come to live with them following ill health. The use of the internet together began as a form of entertainment – playing card games – but it soon garnered a wider citizenship role as her grandfather began searching for legal codes and information and developed into:

A love to sue. My grandfather is very active civically in real life and he looks online for laws, and I sit with him and try to explain how to use the online consultant services and how to search for Federal Laws online and so on.

As I've written elsewhere (Turbine, 2007), the use of new modalities to engage in older practices - here of appealing to the administration and of holding the state to account in line with the law - can be read as a form of consentful contention (Turbine, 2015b). This reveals how pre-existing expectations about the role of states and citizens intermingle with new modalities of citizenship across generations (see also Brabazon, 2005). The implicit citizenship learning between generations as illustrated in Nadia's account earlier was continued in her interview as she revealed seeing her grandfather's engagement with the law, in turn spurred on her own civic interest and ideas about civic duty. However, others had a less optimistic view about the potential of online technologies for citizenship and for fostering new citizenship for older generations.

Ira, in her thirties, reflected on local government initiatives to get citizens online as a means of boosting participation. Her perspective revealed how ambivalent this can be and how younger women viewed the capacity of older generations to engage in such new forms:

So the governor has announced that everyone (officials) write blogs, so that every citizen has a chance of redress, but every citizen is not every granny and grandpa. Even my Mum, I can tell her, go online and voice your concerns to the Governor, it would take her so much time to figure out how to do it online, she'll probably give up interest. If she were doing it offline, she might have kept going. So the middle generation may also not be interested.

Ira brings in the idea of the 'middle generation' here - those who had grown up and were employed in the late Soviet period and who had lived as young adults through the collapse. As with Yana's discussion of older generations as conservatism cited earlier - Ira implies that it is not only the elderly that hold conservative attitudes and habits. In a discussion about the prospect of increased state censorship of online spaces justified in terms of protecting minors, Ira argued 'not everyone believes those Soviet scare stories':

Older parents, say 45 and over, say with kids who are in their teens, there is no guarantee they will be well versed with the Internet, so can't control the content themselves [in contrast to younger parents who set parental controls]. So these parents are unable to do this,

so maybe censorship from the state – well, no one believes the Soviet tales anymore - some censorship [is appropriate], for swearing, pornography, violence – at least to reduce it.

Another participant, Anya, a recent graduate who was unemployed at the time of the interview, again revealed this perceived generational distinction through a discussion of how pivotal the internet had become in enacting citizenship for her; again using a new technology for an older practice of complaint making to officials. Anya entered into a lengthy discussion about how she tracked and protested local corruption by following & posting on local government officials' social media accounts. However, when asked if this was indicative of an active interest in politics, she replied:

I can't say I'm really interested in politics, I don't like it much what's happening in Russia. [I: And what is that?] – Chaos, disorder (laughs). I mean I'm not at an age where I need to feed my family and pay my rent – I live with my parents, so any money I have, I can spend on myself. But I see how other people live; I see the minimum wage here and what the prices are... What ignorance there is in Russia, how angry people are, such indifference and poverty. Such stupid laws like this one on not insulting the feeling of religious believers. Things like that. This is the news. I don't like to read about how awful our government is, it's better not to see it until you absolutely have to face it.

This extract is relevant to the discussion here because of the use of the tropes of 'chaos' and 'disorder', which echoed the ways in which older women with lived experience of the Soviet past interviewed across my projects have described post-Soviet Russia - as in contrast to an ordered and predictable past that has been lost. What is more interesting is that Anya situated herself as not concerned with these issues - they felt distant from her - politics was viewed as something done above and beyond her and as temporally distant. Youth pushed these concerns into the distance for Anya, but living in an intergenerational space led to an internalisation of these as difficulties to come. Young women may be able to choose to spend money on themselves and enjoy a less stressful life now, but a future horizon of a family and material struggle was clearly embedded. Thus, this was not a straightforward inheritance of a better past than the chaotic future, rather a more ambiguous account of a present that was liveable.

On the one hand, these discussions indicate a distinction being made by younger women between generations and the attitudes of 'do it yourself' via new technologies as one way of distinguishing perceptions and behaviours from older generations who were 'stuck' in

old forms. There were also generational distinctions made in some women's resistance to conservatism they say in their older family members - that dovetailed with an opposition by some to that which was being re-enacted by the state - in rejecting 'stupid laws', as Anya put it. This was also shown in expressing frustration with the ways in which staying with past practices had negative daily effects in the most mundane circumstances. At the same time, there was also a knowing - via these intergenerational interactions, in household complaints and citizenship practices - that the present time was different from a Soviet past, but it continued to be structured by and refracted through it.

Intergenerational distinctions and solidarities: 'My dad still lives in the USSR, to this day'

The attempts to carve out new spaces and forms of citizenship using online spaces and resources revealed in the 2013 interviews led to a new project focusing more explicitly on how women defined their everyday political engagements in 2014. A set of interviews conducted in 2014 had the initial aim of understanding what effect the crackdown on feminism - as emblematically displayed in the reaction to Pussy Riot (Turbine, 2015b) - had for women's political engagements in daily life. Again, here inheritances and memories of the Soviet was not the focus, but it resurfaced throughout. In a large part this was because as the interviews were conducted as the conflict with Ukraine escalated over the Summer-Autumn of 2014. This affected the interviews in two ways: at a thematic level, the ramifications of the Ukraine conflict dominated as the most important political issues facing women - as Olga, a beauty worker in her late twenties, succinctly put it: 'You can't get past Ukraine' (Turbine, 2016). In addition, it shaped the ways in which women presented themselves and situated their everyday lives and identities in relation to a Soviet past as public discourses of the 'past' greatness of the USSR circulated and suffused daily life.

In opening questions asking the participants to say a little about themselves, some responses were more akin to a biographical interview. Some women began recounting their place of birth and the life and work histories of their parents - unprompted. This revealed how women saw themselves as situated in the present as a result of their families relationship with the dissolution of the USSR. This can easily be understood as a consequence of the heightened state driven collective narratives of former USSR glory, brotherhood and nostalgia for

empire. However, women's narratives also revealed ambivalence and resistance to a public narrative of greatness and patriotism (Turbine, 2016). In this section, the focus is on how these family stories of navigating the (ongoing) end of the USSR played out in shaping more everyday present concerns (that are of course entwined with the geopolitical, see Turbine, 2016).

In the wider research on intergenerational differences within households (see for example Valentine, Piekut, Harris, 2015), there is a focus on how this creates tensions and negotiations of difference. This negotiation of difference was certainly evident in the interviews across the projects. Yet, intergenerational inheritances also generated empathy and understandings. Here, discussions of grand/parents past lives were characterised as one of sacrifice and solidarity that have not translated into contemporary gains in wages, pensions, or employment. The evidence of empathy - rejecting past practices is not the same as a rejection of an older generations' ideals. This is particularly the case where future imaginaries of precarity create spaces for shared concerns about material and cultural welfare.

The quote in the subheading for this section is taken from an interview with Liubov, a social sciences student in her late teens who described herself as not interested, or at least put off, politics by the dominance of male voices and narratives about 'patriotism'. In this discussion, Liubov said she associated politics with patriotism and she rejected the label patriot, like others in this cohort, because it was associated with some kind of fanaticism and extremism, or with the past - with the USSR. Liubov mentioned 'then' in her discussion of patriotism and the interviewer picks this up with the question:

I - When you say 'then', do you mean during the Soviet Union?

Well, my dad tends to say, "What is this 'Russia'? I don't know any 'Russia'; I was born in the USSR. This is now not my motherland". I don't know if things were worse or better, but I don't think because you were born in one place that you have to only ever be there.

Another participant, Vera, a business studies student in her early twenties also spoke about how she inherited memories of the USSR as a home, albeit a lost one, via discussions with her parents. Vera began her interview discussing how she was not born in Ulyanovsk, but came to the city from a former Soviet Central Asian Republic when she was a young child. She explained:

We came after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Not at once, of course, after a few years when an anti-Russian sentiment had begun to develop there. Then my dad found a job here.

I. How was this anti-Russian sentiment expressed?

Well, about then, I can't really say, as I don't remember much. We have relatives who still live there and they told me, well my cousin who is my age and has a decent education and so on, she can't get a job because she is Russian. They won't even take you on as a cleaner.

I. And do you feel you have been accepted here?

It's been fine, since the moment I arrived [as a child]. My parents seem happy. Even when we talk about it, my parents knew that at some point we would have had to move, because there was pretty much no future there. So it's ok.

While Vera states she can't remember this time, it is abundantly clear how the former space of the USSR continues to exist through living relations, and is part of everyday family stories of how we get to where and how we are. The ways in which we 'are' result from our past and relational lived experiences that were also highlighted by another participant, Olga. Olga was in her late twenties and working in the beauty industry in a family business at the time of the interview. Olga entered into a lengthy discussion in her interview about why she didn't engage much in politics. Within this discussion the collision of inheritances of a re-imagined Soviet past as equated with social welfare and social justice values alongside framings of this past as unfit for new times emerged:

From time-to-time I do [engage with politics]. I listen in sometimes on the TV, to the news when I'm getting the kid ready, or if I'm listening to a client at work. In general, I don't have the time and not that much interest. Granny and granddad listen and of course they tell me all about it. Although I stopped listening to them a long time ago.

I: are they politically active?

Well, they listen, all the elderly, they are all interested, listen, watch, of course about pensions, what is going to be taken or not. To them this information is really important.

Olga continues to talk about proposed changes to pensions entitlements and also to the high costs of communal services as core contemporary problems for people in Russia – and as unresolved questions from the Soviet era (see also Turbine, 2007). In her conclusion, the revealing empathy for older generations and a level of restorative nostalgia (Boym, 2001, cited in May, 2017, p. 409) is clear. In her concluding reflections on her frustrations with the ongoing problems of the legacies of Soviet infrastructures and bureaucracy – the material fabric of daily life – Olga indicates a sense of loss for what might also have been good. This clearly resonates with the inherited memories from grand/parents and is also similar to the loss narratives that were so prominent in interviews conducted in 2005 and discussed in the first part of this chapter. Olga concluded:

Well, I think that when a person works for 40 years in one place and gets a small pension, the minimum pension, how is it possible to afford food, medicine in our country, there is already nothing for free...so then you either don't eat -you don't live.

The theme of lack of work and lack of recompense for past and present hard work for older intimate others was another common way in which a loss narrative and restorative nostalgia emerged across all interviews conducted 2005-2014. While most participants by 2014 saw their lives as distinct from their mothers and grandmothers, and for the better, inherited memories of the good elements of the Soviet period continued to emerge in juxtaposition to the structural & cultural issues that continue to disproportionately affect women. As Boym (2008: 13) highlights - the line between the restorative and the reflective nostalgia is blurred. In an interview with Masha, in her mid-twenties, on maternity leave from a state sector job, and a self-identified Russian Orthodox believer, the USSR emerged as rehabilitated - an imagined memory of the USSR as powerhouse of modernity - in a discussion of the ongoing economic problems, namely unemployment and low wages in the city. When the interviewer asks what could be done to resolve these kinds of problems Masha answers:

I don't know, build factories, enterprises, like there were before, for example in the Soviet Union, maybe something like that. At the moment we are used to foreign investors coming in.

In a context of aftermath of the foreign agents laws (Wilkinson, 2014) and sanctions as a result of the annexation of Crimea (Gilligan, 2016), the increasing uncertainty of what impact this would have on the economy for respondents interviewed in 2014 was clear. That a

vague knowledge of factories and enterprises from ‘before’ were posited as a possible solution reveals how women were also living in a context suffused by renewed collective projects of patriotism and nationalism that selectively invoke imaginaries of the Soviet for contemporary aims. Yet it was not only the public collective memory projects that influenced imaginaries, it is also made in the intimate connections with the lived experiences of their mothers. Masha also discussed how she relied on her Mum for information & knowledge about politics because she was at home all day caring for a new baby. As Masha spoke at length about her mum’s longstanding career within the justice system and her strong anti-corruption values, it was clear how her Mother’s retelling and framing of the contemporary was inflected with reflections on political, economic and social changes from a ‘Soviet time’ in both positive and negative ways. Again, it is in these implicit references that inheritances from others of past and lost values, material realities, and of some forms of economic security, emerge. They then sit alongside a dominant framing of the self as distinct in views, outlook and aspirations from past generations that are, unfortunately, not able to adapt. Thus, there is contestation and resistance to pasts, presents and futures imagined where women remain constrained.

Conclusion

This chapter has drawn on the extant theorising of inherited memory and imagined futures to analyse how young women living in a provincial Russian city who were born, or came of age after the end of the USSR, refer to a Soviet past in meaning-making processes about their own rights and political engagements. Focusing the gaze on the daily lived experiences of rights and politics amongst non-activist young women made in their intergenerational relations with intimate others highlights how young women are particularly positioned as not only post-Soviet, but also gendered neoliberal subjects. This recalls the importance of the call for a feminist memory studies as advocated by Hirsch and Smith (2002) and sheds new light on how parts of a Soviet past, both collective and personal, are inherited and used by young women in making sense of and making a life in a neoliberal and neoconservative context. This chapter has shown a multiplicity of ways in which fragments of collective Soviet histories percolate through everyday life and are part of women’s repertoire of making sense of their rights and selves. Through small-scale qualitative work, the shifting temporal and emotional proximity to the USSR as a lived and inherited experience between 2005-2014 is revealed in how inherited pasts are communicated and received. This is especially the case where the conflict with Ukraine brings politicised memory projects of empire and brother-

hood to the fore of public discourse and policy. The collective and public projects are also brought home via inter-generational living and intermeshing with inherited memories for grandparents, mothers and fathers. How this then sparks a diversity of re-imaginings of the Soviet to be transmitted and inherited is worth further examination.

Inherited memories matter. They produce ideas about the distinctiveness and the solidarities between generations. In post-Soviet Russia, this is a crucial area of research as the politicisation of collective memory projects are heightened. The young women interviewed represent only a small group of relatively privileged - in terms of higher education, employment, and income - young women living in a provincial city. Yet, their narratives show how understandings of a Soviet past run through daily life, but not those largely based on a state and collective narrative of victory and empire, although these stories are known, but an understanding that is also co-constituted in the intimate and interpersonal relations of intergenerational family lives.

These mundane and daily resonances, re-collections and active re-imaginings of a Soviet past by older intimate others – as a place, a time, a social contract, a cultural standard, a good life – are the frames in which these young women inherit a past. As theorisations of collective memory highlights (Halbwachs, Connerton), memory is social and relational and the family is a crucial collective within a broader societal network of relations. How young women variously engage and question these narratives impacts on how they see their present and imagined futures. Through these engagements, the Soviet past reimagined as an idealised social welfare and social justice project, is both nostalgically viewed by some, and actively resisted by others who see themselves as adapted and new, a consumer citizen with choice and freedom - as ‘getting on’ (in theory at least). Yet, the imaged idealised past can also reveal desires for a more socially just now and future (see also Smith & Campbell, 2017). Focusing on how young women refer to the Soviet in relation to their own rights and politics also reveals how a concern and empathy for older generations is enabled through the process of inheriting memories. Inherited pasts are also being repackaged and this is an area worthy on ongoing research to ascertain where engagement and resistance with collective memory projects in authoritarian - and democratic - contexts occur and to what political effect for women.

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Notes

ⁱIn Russia, intergenerational household are common due to legacies of housing shortages and the current difficult economic situation that keeps young people financially dependent. Younger people are living with their parents for longer, a trend seen across the globe and in post-industrial, post-financial crisis Europe.

ⁱⁱ This piece of research was funded by the Economic & Social Research Council as part of the project 'The Internet and everyday rights in Russia'. Details of the project and outputs can be found here: <http://www.researchcatalogue.esrc.ac.uk/grants/RES-000-22-4159/read>

ⁱⁱⁱ The interviews conducted in 2013 and in 2014 were conducted on the author's behalf by Russian-speaking social scientists owing to the author's maternity leaves. The 2014 project was funded by the University of Glasgow Adam Smith Research Foundation.

^{iv} Owing to word limit constraints, full discussion of the methodology and sample are not included here. For full detail of the 2005 project, see Turbine (2007), for details of the 2013 and 2014 projects, see Turbine (2015).

^v All quotes are attributed to participants using a pseudonym. In order to protect their anonymity and confidentiality only a general level of contextual and demographic information is provided.

^{vi} The participant is referring to state led, youth organisations that aimed to appropriately socialise young people as Soviet citizens.