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Running the Risk: Why Citizens Choose to Engage in Political Protest in 21st Century Russia

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Why Citizens Choose to Engage in Political Protest In 21st Century Russia

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By
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Introduction:

On December 22, 2022, a 61 year old Russian man by the name of Vladimir Rumyantsev sat in a courtroom in Vologda, a city in northwest Russia, awaiting his sentencing. He had been found guilty of "public dissemination of knowingly false information about the actions of the armed forces of the Russian Federation."[1] This charge came from Rumyantsev broadcasting a radio show from his apartment, where he played audio tracks from opposition bloggers and the media about the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Additionally, Rumyantsev has reposted content from the opposition media on his personal social media page. He was charged with three years in a penal colony. Rumyantsev's lawyer says of his client, "He is a stoic. He understood that he would be arrested, there was only one question - when. He is stoic about this: he is ready to sit for the truth and is not going to change his beliefs."[2] Rumyantsev is one of many Russians who have chosen to engage in high risk protest, despite knowing they will face severe consequences, and likely enact little to no change in a brutal system. This thesis will cover over ten years of political protest and three protest movements in 21st century Russia, in an attempt to explain why Russians choose to engage in high risk protest.

The actions of these Russians go against traditional theory around why people choose to protest. Political scientists have long held the belief that citizens choose to engage in protest when there are openings in the political system, and they believe that their actions will result in change. This thesis attempts to provide an alternative explanation to understand why individuals

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[1] "'I Understood That They Would Be Arrested, There Was Only One Question - When':About Political Prisoners in 2022 - Their Relatives and Lawyers." Cherta Media , April 17, 2023. https://cherta.media/story/politzeki/.
[2] Ibid.,

choose to protest, despite limited possibilities for success and a largely closed political system. Ultimately, I will use four factors to explain high risk protest: moral emotions, ideological identification, biographical availability, and relational and organizational ties to social networks.

The first section of this thesis will start by giving a background on methods of resistance in non-democratic systems and giving a definition of high risk protest. I will then focus on traditional theories on social movements, with a focus on two facets of the political process model: political opportunity and recruitment. I will then give a review on the literature on emotions and social movements, with special focus paid to moral and reflex emotions. I will then explain why I feel that moral emotions are most effective to explain movement participation. I will then look at an alternative model of mobilization which looks at transforming everyday relationships into activist networks, rather than the movement recruitment seen in the political process model. I will then introduce my four factors for movement participation and give a detailed account of how each of these factors facilitates movement participation in a high risk context.

The second section of my thesis will first give an overview of Vladimir Putin's years in charge of Russia. This section will look at how Putin maintains his base of support and his role as the dominant actor between competing networks in Russia. I will then trace Putin's changing political ideology from wishing for Russia to be a member of the liberal international community, to creating a more isolationist Russia.[3] The next section of this section will give an overview of the history of civic activism in Russia in the three decades following the collapse of the Soviet Union. I will argue that in the 1990s and early 2000s NGOs and foreign funding

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[3] Richter, James. "Taming the Revolution: The Politics of Memory One Hundred Years after October." *History and memory* 31, no. 2 (2019): 45–77.

played a large role in Russian activism. However, by the end of the early 2000s a mass exodus in foreign funding led to activists transforming their tactics, and a largely turning to an informal network and the use of online spaces.[4] The next section will focus explicitly on the role of social media for activism in Russia and give an overview of the main social media platforms.

The next section will give an overview of each of the three protest movements I will be examining. I will give a background to the movement, and information about the scale and consequences of the protests. The first movement I will look at is the 2011-2012 movements, which took place after a series of allegedly fraudulent elections for the 2011 Duma election and the 2012 presidential election. The second section will look at now deceased activist Alexei Navalny's 2017-2018 presidential campaign, and the protests which erupted after his arrest in 2021. The final section will look at the protests which have occurred since Russia's full scale invasion of Ukraine in February of 2022. After I give an overview of each protest movement, I will look at the overall risks of protest in Russia, with a focus on the current political climate.

The next section will look at my methods, and the evidence that I use to examine each case study, as well as how I went about gathering these sources. Before I go into the individual case studies, I will explain my overall approach to the research.

The next section will be my analysis of the 2011-2012 protest movements. In this section I will briefly touch on how moral emotions played a role in the protest movement, with the acknowledgement that there is limited evidence of this factor. I will then argue that this protest movement is most closely aligned with the traditional models of recruitment seen in the political process model. Additionally, this protest movement can be looked at using the political

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[4] McIntosh Sundstrom, Lisa, Laura A Henry, and Valerie Sperling. "The Evolution of Civic Activism in Contemporary Russia." *East European politics and societies* 36, no. 4 (2022).

opportunity model with the caveat that Russia is a non-democratic regime, and all avenues for change will go through extra institutional actions. I will trace the growth of social organizations which often originated at the micro level, and how personal ties and the internet served to connect these organizations into a broad social network.[5] I will argue that the movement allowed individuals to have both relational as well as organizational ties to the movement, which both serve to increase movement participation. Then, looking at interviews with activists, I will argue that the role of these social networks helped to give activists feelings of solidarity and collective power, which lead to them showing up en masse.

The next section will look at the supporters of Alexei Navalny's presidential campaign, and why these individuals chose to engage with his network. I will also then look at the organization of the protests which occurred after his arrest in 2021. In looking at the group of Navalny's online supporters, the vast majority are incredibly young. The social network and base of support which Navalny built up during the 2011/2012 protests played little role in his base of support in 2017/2018. In order to explain why these new individuals support Navalny, I looked at factors such as a yearning for an activist experience as well as the appeal of Navalny's rhetoric and his social media presence. These factors fit into the existing theory around moral emotions and ideological identification. When looking at the role of social networks in Navalny's base, I argue that while there is the existence of a vast social network and activists gain organizational ties, there is little evidence of the intimate ties between activists which were present during the 2011-2012 movement.

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[5] Smyth, Regina. 2021. *Elections, Protest, and Authoritarian Regime Stability : Russia 2008-2020*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 5

The next section will focus on the protests in Russia after Russia's full scale invasion of Ukraine. This section will start by looking at the current climate in Russia, which is one of extreme distrust and citizens turning on each other for protesting the conflict. Due to this increasing repression, there has been a mass exodus of activists, who have left Russia due to concerns for their safety. I argue that social networks in Russia have largely broken down, with the loss of the Navalny network serving a significant blow to the opposition's ability to organize. Due to the lack of social networks, the role of moral emotions and ideological identification has become increasingly important and will take center stage in this section. I will use interviews with Russians who have chosen to protest to show how moral emotions can drive individuals to engage in incredibly high risk activism. The last part of this section will look at "The Way Home Movement," which is an activist network of mothers and wives of Russian men fighting in Ukraine. This network provides an alternative argument for why individuals have protested the war.

Literature Review and Theory:

Different Types of Resistance:

This thesis attempts to answer the question of why individuals choose to engage in high risk protest despite the risks. This section will first start off by looking at traditional methods of protest in non-democratic systems and explain why open protest in oppressive regimes is a rarity. I will then define what high risk protest is, and briefly touch on the different ways it is studied.

In non-democratic systems, civil society remains weak and therefore it is harder to mobilize opposition.[6] This is due to a lack of organizations and infrastructure in place to link aggrieved individuals into collective action. Protest therefore will look different than the common image of people out in the streets, chanting with signs. Due to the risks of protesting in a repressive regime, the vast amount of protest is under the radar, and avoids confrontation with authorities which could lead to severe punishment for the protester. James C Scott focuses much of his research on the "weapons of the weak" or how citizens under repressive, authoritarian regimes are able to protest. Scott defines the "ordinary weapons" of powerless groups as foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, and sabotage.[7] These forms of protest require little planning and they usually avoid any confrontation with authority. Scott draws a line between "everyday" resistance which most of the previous tactics fall under, and what can be referred to as open resistance.[8] Both every day and open

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[6] Smyth, Regina. *Elections, Protest, and Authoritarian Regime Stability : Russia 2008-2020*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. 2.
[7] Scott, James C. *Weapons of the Weak Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985. https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300153620, 29.
[8] Ibid., 32.

resistance have intention behind them and are not random. Both forms of resistance have the intention of hindering the goals or function of one group, while advancing their own livelihood and goals. Resistance should be measured by intention rather than consequence, as many movements, while still significant, fail to reach their intended goal.[9] While everyday resistance is focused on short term gains, open resistance is often focused on systematic change.[10] For my study, I want to focus on open resistance, which can also be defined as being higher risk and more organized.

Open, collective resistance under an authoritarian regime is a rarity. In a repressive regime, oftentimes the oppressed group comes to accept their circumstances as a normal and justifiable part of the social order in which they live. They become actively complicit in their own oppression.[11] Scott theorizes that open, collective resistance can be triggered by sudden changes which destroy routines of daily life. An obstacle to resistance can be "expected repression," when a group of people are aware of the repression they are facing but face the obstacle of the day to day struggle to earn a living. Perhaps this is why, unless their daily life is disrupted, open resistance often does not take place.

It is important to differentiate between the low and high risk protest. McAdam differentiates between something being high risk and high cost. Risk means the anticipated dangers of an action. Cost refers to the effort extended. So for example, liking a political post on social media is low cost, it could pose a large risk to the liker.[12] High risk refers to protest that

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[9] Ibid., 290.
[10] Ibid., 33.
[11] Ibid., 39.
[12] McAdam, D. (1986) Recruitment to high-risk activism: The case of freedom summer. American Journal of Sociology *92*(1), 72

has significant physical danger attached to it, as well as potential legal, financial and social costs.[13] It is often hard to classify what qualifies as a true participant in social movements. Someone may be apathetic to a social issue, but attend some sort of low risk activism, in support of a friend. Due to this study being focused on high risk protest, it is important to differentiate what kind of protest qualifies as high risk. Doug McAdam argues that studies should focus on specific acts of protests, to differentiate who was participating in high risk activism. As will be discussed later on, social movements are usually supported by large networks of people, but only a select few participate in high risk activities.

Political Process Model:

The following section will focus on the political process model, which is the traditional model of social movements, and why they wax and wane. In the political process model, social movements are seen as rational attempts by groups to mobilize sufficient political leverage to advance collective interests through noninstitutionalized means.[14] I will focus on two facets of the political process model: first, political opportunity, which is changes in political structure and environment which allow for increased ability for mobilization, second, movement recruitment which focuses on gaining a critical mass of movement participants, often recruiting from existing infrastructure. These next two sections will give an overview of these two facets.

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[13] Nepstad, Sharon, and Christian Smith. "Rethinking Recruitment to High-Risk/Cost Activism: The Case of Nicaragua Exchange." *Mobilization (San Diego, Calif.)* 4, no. 1 (1999): 28

[14] McAdam, Doug. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. 1st ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. 36.

The Model of Political Opportunity:

This section will define political opportunity. In political science research, political opportunity has been used as an independent variable to help explain the timing of collective action, and the outcomes of movement activity. Political opportunity structures are at their most broad, any environmental factor which facilitates movement activity. McAdam synthesizes other scholars' research, to determine four key factors which are dimensions of political opportunity. These factors explain how political opportunity can expand or be diminished. First, there is the relative openness or closure or the institutionalized system. Second, there is the stability or instability of elite alignments that support a polity. Third, there is the absence or presence of elite allies. Finally, there is the state's capacity and propensity for repression.[15]

In some cases, changes in the institutional or legal structure of a nation can allow for changes in political opportunity, through granting more formal political access. The rise and success of non-institutionalized protest movements tend to be tied to either a lack of repression, or a significant decrease in the will or ability of a state to repress.[16] Additionally, social movements often emerge during periods of political and economic transition.[17]

Regina Smyth looks at the ways that opportunity structure works in non-democratic regimes. The processes in non-democratic regimes are often less formal. In democratic regimes, there is a focus on formal institutions and actors, and how they affect the making of policies. In

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[15] McAdam, Doug. "Conceptual Origins, Current Problems, Future Direction." In *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, edited by Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, 23–40. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 25.

[16] Ibid., 26.

[17] Sperling, Valerie. *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia : Engendering Transition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 44.

non-democratic regimes, due to a political structure where there is a lack of formal pathways for citizens to affect policy, there is more of a focus on the role of informal institutions. Additionally, because of the lack of formal pathways, the opposition is limited to using extra institutional actions outside of politics to attempt to enact change.[18] This shows why the opposition often turns to protest to express their grievances. Smyth argues that protest is often linked to elections, as protest is the only way to address power asymmetries.[19] In addition to a lack of formal pathways, the opposition will likely also face a lack of available partners within the government, and access to formal media coverage of their movement to increase the movement's visibility.

Movement Recruitment:

This section will look at traditional theories for how movement participants are recruited. In this theory, for movements to take off activists and participants must be recruited through social networks and indigenous organizations.[20] This recruitment takes place from members of the community. McAdam, as well as other scholars, argue that successful recruitment occurs when there is an indigenous "infrastructure" which can link members of the aggrieved population into an organized campaign.[21] While this work often focuses on mobilization in minority communities, it can also be used to look at more homogenous societies. The capacity of

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[18]Smyth, Regina. *Elections, Protest, and Authoritarian Regime Stability: Russia 2008–2020*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. 33.

[19] Smyth, Regina, Anna Lowry, and Brandon Wilkening. "Engineering Victory: Institutional Reform, Informal Institutions, and the Formation of a Hegemonic Party Regime in the Russian Federation." *Post-Soviet affairs* 23, no. 2 (2007). 121.

[20] McAdam, Doug. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. 1st ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. 44.

[21] Ibid.,.

communities to organize a successful movement is based on the extent of organization within the community. If no networks exist within communities, the aggrieved population is not capable of successful mobilization.[22]

Anthony Oberschall theorizes that the greater numbers of organizations in a society, and the higher numbers of participation of members in existing social networks, the more rapid mobilization for a movement will be.[23] This is because resources are already partially mobilized, there are existing individuals with leadership skills, and there are individuals with participation experience.[24] The more integrated an individual is in their community, the easier it will be for them to mobilize into protest activities. Similarly, Debra Minkoff argues, political opportunity structure becomes more favorable to protest as organization density increases.[25] This is due to an increase in available partners, skills, and resources, as well as the movement having a broader reach to recruit unaligned citizens. When there are only a few existing organizations, it is unlikely that they will overlap, and that members of the organization will link together. However, as more organizations pop up in a city, the more likely that members are to encounter each other and form linkages. These linkages will lead to the organizations as a whole to become connected, leading to them to be able to join forces for movement mobilization.

The literature around recruitment concludes that movement participants are recruited from established lines of interaction. Scholars such as Gerlach and Hine believe that no matter

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[22] Ibid.,

[23] Oberschall, Anthony. *Social Conflict and Social Movements*. Englewood Cliffs., N. J: Prentice-Hall, 1973. 125.

[24] Ibid.,

[25] Minkoff, Debra C. "The Sequencing of Social Movements." *American Sociological Review* 62, no. 5 (October 1997): . https://doi.org/10.2307/2657360. 780.

what an individual's reason for joining the movement, their participation would not be possible without some sort of contact with the movement.[26]

McAdam theorizes that there are two ways in the political process model that individuals can be recruited. First, they can be recruited to join a movement due to their involvement in an organization which is part of the network in which a new movement emerges.[27]

Secondly, these existing organizations can serve as the primary source of movement participants, through "bloc recruitment" where existing groups merge for a new movement.[28] In order for the rapid mobilization of a movement, there is less of a reliance on recruiting individuals, but instead on recruiting participants who are already part of existing organizations.

These established networks and organizations create a communication network or infrastructure.[29] The strength and span of this communication network determine many factors of the movement, such as the speed it arises, the span of the movement, and the matter in which it organizes. Movements fail when its members are unable to communicate with each other.

Emotions and Social Movements:

In this project, I ask the question of how movements persist when there is little to no political opportunity, and the perceived efficacy of the movement is low. The political opportunity model assumes that actors are rational. They bide their time, waiting for openings in

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[26] Gerlach Luther P. *People Power Change; Movements of Social Transformation*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill. 1970. 79.
[27] McAdam, Doug. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. 1st ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. 45.
[28] Oberschall, Anthony. *Social Conflict and Social Movements*. Englewood Cliffs., N. J: Prentice-Hall, 1973. 125.
[29] McAdam, Doug. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. 1st ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. 46.

the system before engaging in protest, with the assumption that the protest will end in some sort of success. However, even when movements have little chance of succeeding, they still precede. Ultimately, I believe that as political opportunity and the role of social networks shrinks, the role of emotions for motivating someone to protest grows in importance.

I have identified emotions as a factor which can cause an individual to become motivated to protest, despite low opportunity and perceived efficacy. Emotions have the ability to outweigh reasonable doubt about a movement's efficacy, and instead cause an individual to feel that acting is imperative because it is the morally right choice. This is because, for some individuals, in order for them to experience self-realization, or self-fulfillment their actions must align with their moral code. For these individuals, the risk of protest is less costly than failing to abide by their moral code.

This section will first focus on different emotional states which are related to protest, and what triggers these states. I will then look at two different emotions which are connected to protest. First, reflex emotions, which are intense emotions triggered by external stimuli. Reflex emotions cause an individual to act rashly, and for action to be taken which escalates a situation, often to a point of harm. Due to this, reflex emotions are often counterproductive to protest movements. I will then look at moral emotions, which are more long-term emotions, which are part of an individual's identity. People’s desire to abide by their moral code and follow what is right and wrong has a strong implication for whether they choose to protest.

Emotional States:

Emotions directly relate to humans' decision-making processes. Emotions define how people define interests. Pearlman theorizes that while humans often have a long list of desires, emotions help rank a human's desires.[30] An example of this is someone choosing to shelter a relative from the authorities. The individual will have conflicting desires. They will desire personal safety, and to avoid trouble, and will fear the authorities themselves. However, they will also desire to keep their loved one safe and will feel compassion for them. The strength of these emotions, fear vs. compassion will decide what the individual chooses to do. Emotions also can be strong motivators for action. Emotions are often linked to impulse, and automatic emotional judgments to an event often precede slow, calculative thinking. When an emotion is particularly intense, it has the potential to supersede logical decision making, and directly impact behavior.

Wendy Pearlman attempts to define the effects of different emotional triggers. She refers to these as emotional states. Emotional states are emotions which are triggered by specific events. The first, she describes as a reflex emotion, which can be triggered through an encounter with an environment, and often dissipates when the individual has left the environment. For example, if an individual is out in public and sees individuals wearing merchandise from a political candidate they disagree with, they may become angered. However, this anger is likely to dissipate once they are out of that environment. If this emotion continues and begins to affect the individual's social interactions, Pearlman classifies it as an affective orientation. Another

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[30] Pearlman, Wendy. "Emotions and the Microfoundations of the Arab Uprisings." *Perspectives on Politics* 11, no. 2 (2013):. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43280795. 391.

emotional state which is triggered by a certain environment, in this case a group setting, is a crowd feeling. Similar to a reflex emotion, a crowd feeling dissipates once the environment is gone. A crowd feeling could cause a protest to escalate and grow in intensity. Many of these emotional states are created directly as a result of external factors. External factors appear as a new event or information, which causes an individual to feel certain emotions and prioritize certain values, in a reaction to these new circumstances.[31] These emotional states could have a strong correlation with protest, as they are directly triggered by external factors.

Reflex Emotions:

I will now define reflex emotions, and why they are important to look at in a political context. I will focus on two emotions in depth, fear and anger. Reflex emotions are an automatic response to a surprising event. Reflex emotions are responses to something that happen in the immediate physical environment, or through the intake of new information. A reflex emotion can be anger, disgust, and fear, but also joy and excitement. Reflex emotions are usually quick to appear in response to stimuli, and due to their intensity cannot be maintained for long before they subside. An example of reflex fear is the fear after seeing a spider, vs more long-term fear about how one will do in their physics class. Because of their quick reaction, the "fight or flight" response could be considered a reflex emotion.[32] Given the intensity of the reaction, it could be due to an individual fearing that their physical welfare is at stake. When a reflex emotion takes

[31] Ibid.,

[32] Jasper, James M. *The Emotions of Protest*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2018. https://doi.org/10.7208/9780226561813., 128.

hold, the individual singles in on this emotion, and are unable to feel anything or focus on anything else until the emotion subsides. It could be due to this intensity, that an individual feels compelled to act right away.

Reflex emotions are derived from individuals' expectations about the world.[33] People's cultural knowledge shapes what they find fearsome. For example, seeing a police officer approach you would be more fearful in a repressive police state, than in a state with little to no police violence. James Jasper writes about the relationship between politics and protest and reflex emotions. He argues that reflex emotions in a political context occur during a sequence of events.[34] For example, an interaction with a police member at a march, and seeing the officer act violently, may trigger a reflex emotion of anger. However, reflex emotions are unlikely to be what got the individual to attend the march in the first place. Jasper theorizes that emotions such as fear and anger have greater potential to cause disruption than emotions such as joy, sadness and surprise.

In a political context, political players try to provoke fear in their opponents, to paralyze them and stop them from acting.[35] This is seen in violent state repression, which can discourage protest. Protest organizers work to control reflex fear, through encouragement mechanisms, which are strategies to empower movement participants. This will be elaborated on in the section on social networks.

Anger encourages action. In the short run, it can lead to aggression, and in the long run lead to vengeance and hate.[36] In the political context, the type of anger that is most relevant is

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[33] Ibid.,
[34] Ibid.,
[35] Ibid.,
[36] Ibid., 130

anger which is in reaction to a perceived injustice in a social interaction.[37] The intensity of reflex anger can cause an individual to overreact, and in their need to right a wrong, they create a new injustice. This aggression is characteristic of reflex anger, and can lead to situations, such as an initially peaceful protest, to escalate quickly. In cases of reflex anger, due to the intensity of the emotion, individuals are less likely to pause to gather more information or reflect, but instead will act swiftly. Anger that does not result in immediate reaction and instead remains with the individual will need to be defined as something else, such as moral anger. Because of the dangers of reflex anger, social organizations involved in protest try to control their participants' anger. This is seen in the training of nonviolent protest tactics.[38] However, despite the risks of anger, it is still vital for a protest movement. Without participants experiencing anger, and feeling there is a villain to blame, they are unlikely to see the point in showing up.

Moral Emotions:

This section will look at different moral emotions. In contrast to reflex emotions, which are born suddenly and then dissipate, James Jasper writes that moral codes rarely change, and when they do the shift is gradual, not sudden.[39] Due to the long term prevalence of moral emotions, they are more likely than reflex emotions to result in an individual becoming part of a social movement. This is due to movement participation being a drawn out process, which needs sustained emotional commitment. This section will first define moral codes, and how they are

[37] Ibid.,
[38] Ibid.,
[39]Ibid.,

created. I will then look at the relationship between morals and protest, and why the importance of following a moral code to lead to someone engaging in high risk protest.

Jesse Prinz argues that moral emotions arise in reaction to conduct which either promotes or goes against someone's moral code.[40]At its most basic, Hutcheson argues, there are two moral emotions. First, there is approbation, or approval, and there is condemnation.

I will now define what moral codes are, and how they are shaped. Moral codes provide a framework for people to make judgments on whether something is right or wrong. A basic self, which has core values, is formed early in childhood, and is a reflection of both genetic predispositions and life experiences.[41] Kristen Monroe argues that an individual's sense of self is key for them constructing their moral code. Through the identity that one shapes for themselves, and who they view themselves to be, morals naturally evolve. A person will wish to follow these morals, as it is important that someone's perceived sense of themselves matches the way they act.[42] A key factor which enables someone to make moral choices is their ability to feel empathy, and to be able to see and recognize moral wrongs.[43]

Additionally, the construction of moral codes are a reflection of the environment someone grew up in. While moral commitments are rarely ever culture wide, and there is moral relativity within societies, when people share a culture there is likely to be some correlation between individuals within that culture's moral commitments. Therefore, it is useful to look at the relationship between culture and morals. Jesse Prinz argues that culture has a large impact on

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[40] Prinz, Jesse. *The Emotional Construction of Morals*, Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2008. 34.
[41] Monroe, Kristen R. *The Hand of Compassion : Portraits of Moral Choice during the Holocaust*. Course Book. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004. 214.
[42] Ibid., 222.
[43] Ibid., 246.

how an individual's morals are shaped. He argues that cultures can be the cause of morality, the effect of morality and the reason for morality.[44]

Morals are inherited by the people an individual is closest to. People receive a moral education from the people around them. Moral education is given through being emotionally conditioned by the people surrounding an individual. These people are often caregivers, role models and peers. Through watching the actions of the people we respect, and their moral judgments, we form our own moral code which often closely mirrors theirs.[45] Morality also binds people together. An individual is likely to want to associate with someone who they feel shares the same moral values as them. They will also want to act in a way which they feel that those who they share the same moral code will approve of. This helps to explain the importance of social networks for resistance. People will seek out others who are experiencing the same moral outrage as them, either on the internet or in person, and engage in collective action.

In many ways moral values are created in order for people to function collectively, by agreeing upon a code of conduct. The larger a society gets, the more variation in morals. In large societies, there are certain subgroups who have different moral values, than other groups within the same society. Protest and conflict occurs when decisions are made by some members of society, which go against others morals codes, and lead to moral outrage.[46]

There is a lack of clarity over which emotions can be defined as moral. I define moral emotions as emotions that arise either due to violation or concurrence with one's moral code. I will use moral anger and contrast it with other types of anger to give an example of how to

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[44] Prinz, Jesse. *The Emotional Construction of Morals*, Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2008. 183.
[45] Ibid.,
[46] Ibid., 106.

define moral emotions. Moral anger is a reaction to a violation of someone's moral code. Moral anger often leads to a desire to restore fairness and justice, either through compensating the victim or through punishing the harm-doer.[47] This is referred to as a moral goal. Moral anger needs to be distinguished from other types of anger, which are personal anger and empathic anger. Personal anger arises from when one's own interests are harmed, or someone feels they themselves have been treated unfairly. Personal anger can inspire the same course of action as moral anger, but it stems from a different source. The motivation for this action also arises from a desire to get revenge, or to further or protect one's personal interests, rather than to restore overall fairness. The motivation therefore is an egoistic goal.[48] Empathic anger arises from seeing someone else being treated unfairly. This anger is not due to feeling that an overall moral standard has been violated, but instead anger over someone the individual cares about being harmed. Courses of action related to empathic anger are again less to do with restoring justice, but instead getting justice for the individual who was harmed. This is referred to as an altruistic goal.[49] In looking at why collective action starts, people will be able to unite on a larger scale if they are all reacting to a moral outrage, than to personal angers which is unlikely to affect them all in the same way. I believe that moral outrage has the capacity to unite people in a way that personal and empathic anger does not. This is because personal and empathic anger will lead to an individual wanting to take direct revenge against those who have wronged them, which could

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[47] Batson, C. Daniel, Christopher L. Kennedy, Lesley-Anne Nord, E. L. Stocks, D'Yani A. Fleming, Christian M. Marzette, David A. Lishner, Robin E. Hayes, Leah M. Kolchinsky, and Tricia Zerger. 2007. "Anger at Unfairness: Is It Moral Outrage?" *European Journal of Social Psychology* 37 (6): 1278.
[48] Ibid.,
[49] Ibid.,

differ from person to person. In contrast, the goal of moral anger is often to fix a system in general, a goal that can united people.

In terms of the role of moral emotions and morality in impacting whether or not someone will protest, it seems that for some individuals, morals play a larger role in their decision making process than others. Kristen Monroe defines these people as "moral exemplars." These individuals are distinguished by the moral values they hold and the degree to which their moral beliefs are integrated into their sense of self.[50] With these individuals, their integrity in their sense of self is dependent on their moral actions being in line with their moral code. When they feel something is morally wrong, but fail to act, they will feel that they have betrayed themselves and their sense of self. Monroe writes that the moral values that these individuals hold are feelings such as a belief in shared humanity, an ability for empathy and a capacity to see and recognize moral wrongs.[51] I believe that individuals for whom moral action is tightly tied into their sense of self, and feel that the mistreatment of others goes against their moral code, are likely to have a strong desire to become involved in protest movements. Participation in social movements leads not only to feelings of self realization, but helps to replace moral outrage with feelings of pride and dignity.

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[50] Monroe, Kristen R. *The Hand of Compassion : Portraits of Moral Choice during the Holocaust*. Course Book. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004. 246

[51] Ibid.,

Mobilization in Authoritarian Context: Everyday Interactions:

This section will give an alternative explanation for mobilization structure in states where there are low levels of existing infrastructure and organizations for movement recruitment. In the political process model of recruitment, existing organizations and their members form linkages, which leads to wide scale collective actions. In states with higher levels of repression, due to several factors such as a weak civil society and distrust in the system, this indigenous infrastructure for movement recruitment is not always present. Due to weak civil society, there is a lack of formal organizations. Existing organizations do not communicate with each other or have the resources to recruit new members. In this section I will look at more informal pathways for movement recruitment, which take place in closed, repressive regimes.

Without traditional avenues for recruitment, social networks form through more informal pathways, such as everyday interactions. The most productive of these interactions emphasize shared identities and grievances. Grievances shared between individuals usually occur when there's an already established connection.

These close connections also help individuals to see past the ideological narratives which are shared with them on state-controlled media. State controlled media serves to depict a version of social reality in which people's concerns are invalid. Through everyday interactions and

shared grievances, individuals can counteract the narrative of reality by the state, by creating a new reality from the lives they share with those they are closest to.[52]

An example of close connections leading to social change is Smith, McCann and Hitchcock's examination of neighbors who protested their apartment building being torn down in Moscow. Neighbors in this building had already established connections before the conflict began.[53] Many neighbors had grown up and been educated together. Due to this history, there was a shared trust between neighbors. They did not meet each other in a political or activist setting, but instead their relationship was formed through everyday interactions. It was through these everyday interactions, and informal spaces that neighbors were able to discuss the issue of the tear down. As conversations continue, and people realize that they share grievances with others, they become more motivated to act.

Clement calls these connections "initiative groups" which take place at the micro-level of a household, neighborhood, or town. Often, the leader of these conversations is someone who is recognized as having authority, through factors such as their level of education, wide contact networks, and social competence.[54] Often these people have been in past leadership positions, not necessarily on the political level, such as in high-ranking cultural roles. These people help to

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[52]Morris , Jeremy, Andrei Semenov , and Regina Smyth. "Everyday Activism: Tracking the Evolution of Russian State and Society Relations ." In *Varieties of Russian Activism: State-Society Contestation in Everyday Life* , edited by Regina Smyth, Andrei Semenov , and Jeremy Morris , 1–29. Bloomington, Indiana : Indiana University Press , 2023. 11.

[53] Smyth, Regina, Madeline McCann, and Katherine Hitchcock. "From Neighbors to Activists: Shared Grievances and Collective Solutions ." In *Varieties of Russian Activism: State-Society Contestation in Everyday Life*, edited by Regina Smyth, Andrei Semenov , and Jeremy Morris , 70–92. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press , 2023.
83.

[54] Clément, Karine. "New Social Movements in Russia: A Challenge to the Dominant Model of Power Relationships?" *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 24, no. 1 (March 2008): https://doi.org/10.1080/13523270701840472. 74.

take initiative and give the operation a sense of legitimacy. These networks, in contrast with civil society organizations in more organized societies, have no formal status or formally elected bodies. The leader's power comes from their people's faith in them, and their willingness to trust their judgment.[55]

Clement has identified certain characteristics which make for successful leaders of initiative groups. First, their leadership comes not from a formal appointment, but being recognized as the leader by the group engaged in collective action. Secondly, the leader must also feel deeply emotionally connected to the people they are working with and are emotionally dependent on their social base.[56] This emotional dependence comes from shared struggle and will increase the longer the relationships last. As the group's time together progresses, they will realize that through their collective action, they are able to enact change. Finally, these leaders ultimately receive an increase in their social capital through their leading role. These leaders begin to become recognized more by people, initially just in their community and then in some regional and federal networks. This recognition leads to respect and trust. Clement writes that these leaders will start to feel that they are worthy of this respect, and their confidence will grow.

An important step towards movement formation is these small microlevel initiative groups becoming connected with each other in order to form a broader coalition.[57] It is often up to the leader of these informal groups to play the role of a social integrator, through building networks. This is done through their good reputation in society, and social capital. Because of the

[55] Ibid., 85.
[56] Ibid.,. 85.
[57]Ibid., 77.

lack of organization in these groups, leaders often rely heavily on their own networks and contacts.

In societies where becoming involved in social movements is high risk, trust is incredibly important. Trust can be built between activists which later leads to high risk protest. However, often these trusting relationships exist before participation in social movements. Social activists often report that they attend their first meetings accompanied by people in their social circle who they trust. The ability to trust in a leader is also important for a leader to appear trustworthy in the eyes of an activist.

Theory: Four Factors for Movement Participation:

In 21st century Russia, many Russian individuals feel themselves unsatisfied with the current state of the nation they live in. However, there are a number of barriers to protest, and the Russian case does not always fit into traditional models of political process. Political opportunity is low and intentionally diminished by the Russian state. Because of the Soviet past as well as current repression on civil society, indigenous infrastructure for social organization is lacking compared to liberal democracies. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, given the repressive, static nature of the state, there is likely a lack of belief that a social movement will actually result in change.

Non Conversion:

Because of all the barriers to protest, many individuals in Russia who are sympathetic to an issue will choose not to go through with protesting. This is called non conversion. This term comes from Dirk Oegemas and Bert Klandermans research on why movement sympathizers

don't participate.[58] In order for something to qualify as non-conversion, the individual must have shown a significant interest in movement participation. A common example is that they signed up to attend a protest, and then at the last minute chose not to attend.

The largest variable that was found to explain non conversion was the absence or decline of mobilization attempts. Often, non conversion has less to do with the individual and more to do with failures of the movement to convert sympathizers into participants.

Another key finding, which is especially important in the context of societies such as Russia, is the impact of a non supportive social environment in non conversion. If individuals feel they will receive supportive reactions for joining a movement, they are more likely to join. If individuals feel their decision to protest will not be supported, especially by individuals in their life they are close to, they are less likely to want to join, even if they are sympathetic to the movement. If the issues were discussed amongst the individuals and their close acquaintances, and the individual knew of acquaintances who were also participating, they were more likely to convert. Conversely, if the issues were not discussed, and the individual did not know anyone else participating, they were more likely to not convert. This closely connects to the idea of relational ties.

Individuals also weigh perceived costs and benefits when deciding to become involved in a movement. When an individual feels that the perceived costs are low, and the benefits high, they will be more likely to participate. The more repressive a regime, the higher the potential costs of participation. Someone's willingness to support a movement is often dependent on the existence and magnitude of grievances, and individuals belief in the efficacy and potential of the

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[58] Oegema, Dirk, and Bert Klandermans. "Why Social Movement Sympathizers Don't Participate: Erosion and Non Conversion of Support." *American Sociological Review* 59, no. 5 (1994): 703–22. https://doi.org/10.2307/2096444. 704.

movement. In authoritarian regimes where protest movements have historically failed, and at times led to harsher repression, belief in the efficacy of the movement may be low. This connects to the idea that individuals are rational, and will only participate in a movement if they believe it will succeed. As grievances and belief in the movement increase, so does an individual's willingness to support the movement.[59]

Four Factors for Movement Participation:

In Russia, individuals for movement participation are highly susceptible to non conversion. This is due to the fact that protest is often high risk and low reward, and their is low perceived efficacy. Additionally, as political opportunity structure shrinks, people will fail to become targets of mobilization attempts. Despite this, large scale protest movements have occurred during 21st century Russia.

In this project, I attempt to break down the processes I believe occur within a person which make them decide to protest, despite it being high risk and low reward. This choice is highly individual, and there will be a wide amount of variation, and cases which don't quite fit. That being said, I have identified four factors which I believe are present in an individual when they choose to engage in protest. First, they experience moral emotions which cause them to feel connected to the movement. Second, they have an ideological identification with the movement, often through past activist experiences and family influence. Third, they have biographical availability which lessens their constraint to movement participation. Finally, they have

[59] Ibid.,

organizational and relational ties to other activists, which gives them paths to movement participation and helps to mitigate feelings of fear and isolation.

I will now define these four terms in more depth. James Jasper defines moral emotions as feelings of approval or disapproval based on moral intuitions or principles.[60] When a person feels that something is "morally wrong" and disapproves of it, they will become motivated to engage in protest against whatever they deem wrong. Additionally, individuals participate in protest in order to experience feelings of dignity, pride and self efficacy which can help to combat feelings of moral outrage. These feelings are experienced through an individual aligning their moral codes with their actions, which is crucial to their sense of self. Ideological identification is when an individual feels connected to a movement through their past experiences. This includes the environment they were raised in, and the political activity and leanings of their family members and role models. If someone is raised in an environment where politics are considered important, they are more likely to get involved than someone who was raised in a politically apathetic household. Another measure of ideological identification is someone's group identity, such as being a member of an oppressed group. If an issue connects to their group and their relation in society, they are more likely to get involved. Both moral emotions and ideological identification connect to one's environment, and what is passed down from their parents and role models. Because of this, there is often a blurry line between the two factors, and they will be used in conversation with each other. The next factor is organizational and relational ties to a social network. Organizational ties refer to membership within a group, while relational ties are more about relationships with other activists. These ties to other activists,

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[60] Jasper, James M. *The Emotions of Protest*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. https://doi.org/10.7208/9780226561813., 135.

as well as belonging to a large network in general gives activists feelings of security and responsibility. Additionally, intimate ties, which is a close relationship with another movement participant, will motivate someone to protest out of loyalty to the individual, even if they doubt the efficacy of the movement, or worry about the risk. The final factor, biographical availability is when an individual has a lack of personal constraints on their ability to protest. Common constraints include full time employment, marriage and children or other family commitments.

I feel that these four factors can be divided into two categories. Moral emotions and ideological identification relate to an individual's relationship with themself, while biographical availability and organizational and relational ties to social networks is related to people's relationship with others. I believe that moral emotions and ideological identification are more personal processes, as they relate to individuals' sense of self. This sense of self is made up of personal ideas of what is right and wrong, and the individual's identity and political orientation. These factors influence people to protest, as it is important to people that their actions are in line with their sense of self. However, if they choose to not go through with this protest, they will only be disappointing themselves. In contrast, organizational and relational ties and biographical availability are factors that include people's relationships to others. A person who is a member of a social network, will create close ties with other activists. If they fail to show up at a protest, they will be letting others down, not just themselves. With biographical availability, it works differently. In traditional theory, if someone has people at home that are relying on them for their income or parental duties, they may be less likely to protest than if they are single. I believe that there is a connection however, because people are still making decisions based on commitments made to others.

In the following sections, I will look at each of the four factors in depth, and explain why each of these four factors encourage individuals to become involved in movement participation.

Political Opportunity and Factors For Movement Participation:

In many cases, an individual must experience all four factors before choosing to engage in higher risk protest. An example of this process is that an individual becomes motivated to protest due to feeling moral outrage about an issue. They come from an environment where political participation is valued, and the issue relates to a piece of their identity. They have a job which allows them to protest without worrying about their job security, and they are single and with no children. Finally, they are a part of several different organizations which help them to learn about protest opportunities, and they have close ties with several other activists.

In many cases all four of these factors are not present. As political opportunity shrinks, and protest becomes more high risk, the repressive nature of the state causes factors such as social networks and biographical availability to deteriorate. Social networks disappear due to fierce repression on civil society which cuts off the reach of organizations, as well as many activists choosing to leave, further breaking ties. As protest opportunities become more and more high risk, biographical availability also shrinks. This is because there are less cases where an individual does not have constraints to protest, and in almost all cases if an individual chooses to protest they will face significant consequences. As these two factors shrink in prominence, the role of moral emotions and ideological identification must grow in importance in order for the individual to go through with protesting.

The Role of Moral Emotions and Protest:

The following section will look at how different moral emotions can contribute to an individual protesting. Some of the main emotions I wish to focus on are feelings of injustice, outrage, dignity, and pride. These emotions are often directly tied to an individual's desire to protest. Shock and outrage, and feelings of injustice often spark a desire for action. This is especially true in situations where there is a clear targetable villain and victim.[61] This is especially true in the case of moral exemplars, who will feel that failure to act after experiencing moral outrage will lead to a lack of self realization. Other moral emotions such as dignity and pride are emotions that individuals think they will be able to feel through the act of protesting. Through protesting, individuals will experience feelings of dignity and pride, which will counteract moral outrage and lead to self realization.

Injustice and Outrage:

The idea of justice is perhaps most tied to morality. Both morality and justice are based on the idea that there is a right and wrong. Justice is often seen as an end goal for social movements, while a sense of injustice often leads to a desire to protest. James Jasper writes that mobilization is often in response to procedural injustice. Procedural injustices are discrete actions taken by authorities, rather than "chronic states of injustice."[62] While people may become numb to chronic states of injustice, procedural injustice may come as a shock and trigger a reflex

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[61] Ibid., 46.
[62] Ibid., 145

emotion, which can shift into a moral emotion. Affective loyalties to a group make an individual more sensitive to perceived injustice against the group. Indignation is the emotion prescribed to someone feeling they are the victim of unfair treatment. In a repressive society, individuals often resort to "weapons of the weak" to express indignation. While these may be cathartic to the individual, it is rarely productive for the movement. It is up to political mobilizers to channel individual feelings of indignation into collective action.[63]

In order to prevent this, elites attempt to portray themselves as morally just. This connects to how elites often have control over ideological sectors of society. Elites want to have mastery over what is right or wrong. If an individual feels that they are operating under the same moral code as the authorities, then they are less likely to feel that choices are unjust.[64]

Shame and Fear:

This section will focus on how stereotypically negative emotions such as shame and fear, may convince someone to protest. Shame occurs when a person feels they have failed to follow their moral rules. Not only does an individual have to bear their own feelings of failure, but they can often be subjected to rejection by their group, by failing to conform to the moral code shared by others. James Jasper differentiates between feelings of shame and guilt. Guilt is usually about a single action, what someone has done. Shame is more tied to someone's identity, and who they

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[63] Ibid., 149

[64] Steinberg, Mark. *Moral Communities: the Culture of Class Relations In the Russian Printing Industry, 1867-1907.* E-book, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb02121.0001.00

are. Shame "pollutes the entire person."[65] Shame can be used as a weapon against group members who violate norms. Sociologist Charles Cooley writes that the anticipation of pride and shame tend to drive people down socially approved paths.[66] In order for a protest movement to work, recruits must feel that participating in it will lead to feelings of pride. Social pressure by a group, and shame if one does not participate, could lead to greater turnout. This connects to the theory of the importance of social networks for social movement participation, and the theory that if someone has more relational ties to a movement, they are more likely to show up at a protest.

J.M Barbalet argues that fear is not always counterproductive for social movements. Barbelet writes that, "fear leads to an actor's realization of where their interests lie, and points in the direction of what might be done to achieve them." [67] This connects to the idea of how emotions help an individual to rank their interests. When an individual is choosing whether to protest, they will ask themselves what is more fearful to them, risking getting in trouble, or failing to do what they believe is right.

Dignity and Pride:

In this section I will go over values which people seek as a result of moral outrage or other negative emotions. Theory around moral emotions points to the fact that when someone

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[65] Jasper, James M. . *The Emotions of Protest*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. https://doi.org/10.7208/9780226561813., 136

[66] Cooley, Charles Horton. *Human Nature and the Social Order*. New York: Scribner, 1902. 372.

[67] Barbalet, J. M. *Emotion, Social Theory, and Social Structure: A Macrosociological Approach*. 1st ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. 149.

experiences moral outrage, they may turn to protest to experience emotions such as pride and dignity.

Wendy Pearlman argues that stimuli which cause feelings such as anger, joy, and pride and invokes one's craving for feelings of dignity cause an emboldening reaction. The effect of an emboldening reaction are optimistic assessments, a sense of personal efficacy and acceptance of risk. It also leads to an individual having a heightened sense of identity. Overall, an emboldening reaction or effect leads to a higher likelihood of political resistance, even if this jeopardizes security.[68] Dignity is a form of pride derived from the feelings that others respect you. It can also be derived from feeling that one has mastery over their personal identity, and a true sense of who they are. One strategy for a discovery of a sense of self is through participation in social movements. William Gamson writes that, "participation in social movements frequently involves enlargement of personal identity for participation and offers fulfillment and realization of the self."[69] This search for self has often been seen as the reason behind the high concentration of young people at protests. Polletta and Jasper argue that activism for many people is a way to construct a desirable self.[70] This idea of political participation helping to build identity can help explain the role of allies in social movements. However, Morris and Braine write that allies must create their political identity "almost from scratch."[71]

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[68] Pearlman, Wendy. "Emotions and the Microfoundations of the Arab Uprisings." *Perspectives on Politics* 11, no. 2 (2013): http://www.jstor.org/stable/43280795. 388.

[69]Gamson, William, "The Social Psychology of Collective Action," in Frontiers in Social Movement Theory , ed. Aldon Morris and Carol Mueller (Yale University Press, 1992), 56.

[70] Polletta, Francesca, and James M. Jasper. "Collective Identity and Social Movements." *Annual review of sociology* 27, no. 1 (2001): 290.

[71] Morris, Aldon, and Naomi Braine. "Social Movements and Oppositional Consciousness." in *Oppositional Consciousness: The Subjective Roots of Social Protest*, edited by Jane Mansbridge and Aldon Morris. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

James Jasper writes that pride and a desire for a good reputation is a widespread and persevering desire amongst humans.[72] How individuals feel about themselves and the group they belong to dictates how they situate themselves in comparison to other individuals and groups. It not only dictates how individuals compare themselves, but also how they interact with others. It is clear that pride is an important emotion that can lead to one feeling the motivation to protest. Pride allows for connection and solidarity with others, while shame often causes alienation.[73] James writes that "pride helps us persist in a course of action despite enormous adversity or risk. (...) Pride and dignity may yield the confidence that is so important to strategic action"[74]

People feel moral pride when they obey their moral rules. Moral rules are obeyed because of fear of punishment if not and because individuals derive joy from feeling like they did the right thing. People feel especially proud, when comparing themselves to others who may not have acted as righteous. James Jasper writes that there is more of a feeling of pride when an individual follows their moral rules despite opposition, rather than when it is expected of them and everyone around them is doing the same. Choosing to protest against something that causes moral outrage, while others choose to stay quiet despite injustice, could lead to feelings of moral pride.

Emotional in-process benefits are emotional consequences which can only be obtained through participating in a movement. Elizabeth Wood writes that through participation in movements, insurgents in El Salvador were able to express moral outrage, assert a claim to

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[72] Jasper, James M. *The Emotions of Protest*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. https://doi.org/10.7208/9780226561813., 129
[73] Ibid., 132
[74] Ibid.., 135

dignity and have grounds for pride.[75] Participating in a movement is also a way to assert agency, and can help in situations where one feels powerless. Wood writes that many insurgents acted in order to act, as they felt it was inhuman to not express moral outrage at the brutality of authorities. They had no choice but to resist if they were to follow their moral code. This is closely connected to the ideas of moral exemplars, for whom their moral code and their actions aligning is imperative for their sense of self.[76] As these actions progressed, insurgents began to have feelings of pride in their agency, and these feelings of pride in some ways replaced the initial feeling of moral outrage.[77]

Ideological Identification:

Individuals are more likely to desire to participate in "high risk" activism if they have an ideological identification with the values of the movement they are choosing to support.[78] Resistance is never done unintentionally, and the acts of resistance and the motivation behind the acts are in constant conversation.

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[75] Wood , Elizabeth. "Peasant Political Mobilization in El Salvador: The Contribution of Emotional In-Process Benefits." In *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, edited by Francesa Polletta, James M. Jasper , and Jeff Goodwin. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press , 2001. 272.

[76] Monroe, Kristen R. *The Hand of Compassion : Portraits of Moral Choice during the Holocaust*. Course Book. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004. 246.

[77] Wood , Elizabeth. "Peasant Political Mobilization in El Salvador: The Contribution of Emotional In-Process Benefits." In *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, edited by Francesa Polletta, James M. Jasper , and Jeff Goodwin. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press , 2001. 272.

[78] McAdam, Doug. "Recruitment to High-Risk Activism: The Case of Freedom Summer." *American Journal of Sociology* 92, no. 1 (July 1986):. https://doi.org/10.1086/228463. 74.

In 1968, Haan, Smith and Block published a study that theorized that one's ideological leanings are a result of early childhood socialization.[79] Researchers such as Coles, note how children learn about the political world through the experience and attitudes of their families.[80] This can often lead to the adoption of certain values, ideologies and practices from their families. In a study of 1960s youth activists, the majority were directly influenced by the political behaviors of their parents.[81] In a study of students who took part in a 2010 protest, a small amount reported going to anti-Iraq war protests and marches as a child in 2003. A family background can also produce political apathy, if a set of parents is uninvolved politically.[82]

Other researchers are less concerned with an individual's childhood, and instead look at the more immediate past. Some theorists believe that a belief that one's membership group is in a disadvantageous position relative to another group could be cause for activism[83]. This relates to the idea of relative deprivation. If someone feels that the group that they are a member of is threatened, they will be more likely to become involved than if they have no stake in the issue.

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[79]Haan, N., Smith, M. B., & Block, J. (1968). "Moral reasoning of young adults: Political-social behavior, family background, and personality correlates." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 10*(3), 183–201. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0026566

[80] Coles, Robert. *The political life of children*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986.

[81] Braungart, M. M., & Braungart, R. G.. "The life-course development of left- and right-wing youth activist leaders from the 1960s." Political Psychology, 11 (1990).

[82] Hensby, Alexander. "Networks, Counter-Networks and Political Socialisation - Paths and Barriers to High-Cost/risk Activism in the 2010/11 Student Protests Against Fees and Cuts." *Contemporary social science* 9, no. 1 (2014): 98.

[83] McAdam, Doug. "Recruitment to High-Risk Activism: The Case of Freedom Summer." *American Journal of Sociology* 92, no. 1 (July 1986):. https://doi.org/10.1086/228463. 65.

Biographical Availability:

One factor that can be used to determine whether someone is likely to protest is "biographical availability." Doug McAdam's research on biographical availability defines it as "the absence of personal constraints that may increase the costs and risks of movement participation."[84] These personal constraints could be full time employment, marriage and children or other family commitments. This logic shows why movement participants are often young, unmarried college students. There is a longstanding stereotype that college students are more likely to join in on movements simply due to them being more idealistic and hungry for change and excitement. While there could be some truth in this, it is also true to consider that students have less commitments.

Wiltfang and McAdam's 1991 study measured different variables of biographical availability in terms of who was willing to participate in high risk activism in the sanctuary movement. They found that age played a large role, with younger individuals more likely to participate. However, they found that marital status was largely a non-factor, with married individuals just as willing to participate in high risk activism as single people. Interestingly, Wiltfang and McAdam found a positive correlation between having children and being willing to participate in high risk activism. They also found a positive correlation between individuals with full time employment and willingness to participate. These findings go against the standard

[84] Ibid., 70.

theory of biographical availability. When looking at the Russian case, it will be important to observe which trend the Russian case fits with.

Organizational and Relational Ties to Social Networks:

This section will focus on organizational and relational ties to social networks, and how connections to a social network facilitate participation in protest movements. Organizational ties refer to membership within a group, while relational ties are more about relationships with other activists. This section will first look at how social networks create collective identity. Next, I will look at different types of social movements, and how each of them can facilitate movement participation. Next, I will look at how participation in social networks helps individuals feel more connected to the issues, and ultimately participate in high risk protests. Finally, I will look at ways that social networks help to mitigate fear of participation through encouragement mechanisms.

Collective Identity:

Social networks are a crucial precursor to movement participation due to their ability to create a collective identity. Polletta and James define collective identity as "an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, practice or institution."[85] This connection could be imagined, rather than experience directly. It is considered a "reasonable

[85] Polletta, Francesca, and James M. Jasper. "Collective Identity and Social Movements." *Annual review of sociology* 27, no. 1 (2001): 285.

expectation" that when collective action is urgent and the group is under threat, others will work in solidarity. In some ways, collective identity works as an obligation to protest with or on behalf of those sharing the identity. Mobilizers can also construct collective identities as a tactic for recruitment. They construct an "us vs. them" mentality, as the perpetrators are different from those choosing to collectively resist.

While collective identity is typically built due to shared identities, the role of allies challenges this notion. Allies are people who join in and show solidarity with the affected group, while not being targets of discrimination themselves. Because allies are often in a position of privilege, they can fail to develop close ties with other movement participants. They can also often be fickle participants, as they lack personal investment that binds them to the cause.[86]

Types of Social Networks for Movement Participation:

I will now define different types of social networks which can facilitate movement participation. While some sort of social network is often necessary for mobilization, the structure of these networks and the way they manifest differs greatly. McCarthy differentiates between four types of social networks, or movement-mobilizing structures. The first, is informal- non movement. These are groups which have no formal structure, and are not directly related to a social movement. These are networks of people that individuals encounter everyday, whether it be their friends, family or coworkers. These networks facilitate communication, and allow for people to share their displeasure, which can ultimately build dissent. These social structures,

[86] Russo, Chandra. "Allies Forging Collective Identity: Embodiment and Emotions on the Migrant Trail." *Mobilization (San Diego, Calif.)* 19, no. 1 (2014): 68.

while extremely important, are often neglected by researchers as they are harder to define and study than more official social networks such as political organizations. However, in the Russian context, these are extremely relevant due to the level of repression on more formal organizations. The second is formal-nonmovement. These are formal social structures that are not created for the purpose of fostering a movement. Examples of these are churches or unions. Sub-groups exist within these organizations, for example prayer groups, or study groups. These formal structures allow for a designated place for people to meet and discuss. The next category is informal-movement. These are informal groups which have the purpose of participating in a social movement. Examples of these are activist networks, or what is referred to as "memory communities" which are networks of demobilized activists. While these networks are incredibly important they lack the formal organization of the final category. The final category is formal-movement. This category is for formal organizations whose purpose is to mobilize for social movements.[87]

Transformation of Low Risk Participants:

Social networks can help transform participants from low risk participants, to those who are willing to participate in high risk protests. In terms of low risk activism, some participants may be apathetic about the issues, but choose to participate to support a friend or simply out of curiosity. Through attending the low risk protest, the individual will be introduced to a network of activists and learn more about the cause from people who care deeply. This does not mean

[87]McCarthy, John D. "Constraints and Opportunities in Adopting, Adapting, and Inventing." In *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, edited by Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, 141–51. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 143.

that the individual will inevitably become passionate about the issue, but it is a path to further involvement.

An important component to participation in high risk activism is a history of activism, which may be lower risk, and involvement in social networks that support the cause.[88] This is illustrated through Hensby's study of a group of students who took part in high risk protest in the U.K during 2010. All students had past political engagement and the vast majority had prior experience in activism.[89]

Relational Ties and Accountability:

Membership in social networks related to the cause, and relational ties are a key factor for participation in high risk activism and fighting against non conversion. McAdam conducted a study of individuals who signed up to participate in the 1964 Freedom Summer Campaign during the U.S Civil Rights Movement. This study looked to identify differences in those who signed up and participated, and those who signed up but failed to show up. The largest difference that McAdam examined were that those who participated had more linkages to the movement.[90] This could be through membership in more organizations, and through ties to individuals whether it be civil rights activists or other participants. In a study of a 2010 protest amongst university

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[88] McAdam, Doug. "Recruitment to High-Risk Activism: The Case of Freedom Summer." *American Journal of Sociology* 92, no. 1 (July 1986): https://doi.org/10.1086/228463.
71.

[89] Hensby, Alexander. "Networks, Counter-Networks and Political Socialisation - Paths and Barriers to High-Cost/risk Activism in the 2010/11 Student Protests Against Fees and Cuts." *Contemporary social science* 9, no. 1 (2014). 97.

[90] McAdam, Doug. "Recruitment to High-Risk Activism: The Case of Freedom Summer." *American Journal of Sociology* 92, no. 1 (July 1986): https://doi.org/10.1086/228463.
71.

students in which they occupied a building, all attendants that were interviewed could name two pre-existing friendships amongst other attendees.[91] One way to explain this high correlation is that if individuals know people are expecting them to show up, and feel a sense of accountability.

While both organizational and relational ties can lead to participation in activism, it is important to differentiate between the two. Organizational ties are less about connections to individuals but instead membership within a wider group, usually social or political. Relational ties are specifically the relationships between individuals. Nepstad and Smith theorize that relational ties are more effective than organizational.

Organizational ties can be effective, and this effectiveness should be measured not in the number of ties but instead in the quality and strength. For example, it is more meaningful to be deeply involved in one organization than to be loosely affiliated with three or four. An important role that organizations do play is in spreading the word about activism opportunities, even if the members do not choose to pursue them.[92]

Interactions with organizations and relations related to the movement help individuals to become involved. In a study of university students done by Hensby, he found that the residence hall students lived in determined whether sympathetic students got involved. If the residence hall introduced them to people involved in the cause they were likely to get involved, while if they were not introduced to people, even if they had intended to get involved, they would stay on the

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[91] Ibid., 101.

[92] Nepstad, Sharon, and Christian Smith. "Rethinking Recruitment to High-Risk/Cost Activism: The Case of Nicaragua Exchange." *Mobilization (San Diego, Calif.)* 4, no. 1 (1999): 35.

sidelines.[93] The more extensive the network of a movement, the more likely individuals are to be targeted.[94]

Encouragement Mechanisms:

Social networks provide individuals with a sense of community while undertaking high risk protests. "Encouragement mechanisms" are mechanisms which groups take to manage or mitigate fear. This theory comes from Jeff Goodwin and Steven Pfaff who theorize that the use of these mechanisms can encourage groups to proceed in high risk activism, despite fears of verbal and physical harassment, economic reprisals, imprisonment, bodily harm and even death.[95]

The first encouragement mechanism they discuss is the existence of intimate social networks. This is closely connected to relational ties. Face to face communication with these networks form intimate ties, which allows for moral support and encouragement between activists. Intimate social ties lead to an individual being more likely to show up, as they know they will not be alone. These intimate ties also generate a feeling of trust knowing someone has their back. For example, activists know that if they are arrested and taken into custody, they will not be forgotten by their friends.[96]

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[93] Hensby, Alexander. "Networks, Counter-Networks and Political Socialisation - Paths and Barriers to High-Cost/risk Activism in the 2010/11 Student Protests Against Fees and Cuts." *Contemporary social science* 9, no. 1 (2014): 98.

[94] Oegema, Dirk, and Bert Klandermans. "Why Social Movement Sympathizers Don't Participate: Erosion and Nonconversion of Support." *American Sociological Review* 59, no. 5 (1994): 704.

[95] Goodwin, Jeff, and Steven Pfaff. "Emotion Work in High-Risk Social Movements: Managing Fear in the U.S. and East German Civil Rights Movement." In *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, edited by Jeff Goodwin, James M Jasper , and Francesca Polletta , Chicago, Illinois : University of Chicago Press , 2001. 286.

[96] Ibid., 288.

The second encouragement mechanism discussed by Goodwin and Pfaff is the attendance of mass meetings. The size of these meetings helps activists overcome feelings of isolation, and gives them a sense of security with numbers. There is also a feeling of collective power, energy and solidarity that is generated from being in a mass group. Mass meetings also help to generate the third encouragement mechanism, which is identification with the movement. Mass meetings not only cause an individual to feel more individually aligned with the movement, but cause feelings of collective identity. [97]

The study of social networks is a good tool for understanding how some participants find their way into high risk protest. It is also a convenient way to study movements, as individuals who are part of these social networks could introduce you to other resources and contacts. However, in repressive societies, studying these networks as an outsider may be hard due to distrust. Furthermore, simply the existence of social networks cannot fully explain high risk participation. There are many people who are involved in these social networks, yet choose not to participate.

[97]Ibid.,

Background:

How Putin Portrays Himself in Russia:

In writing about Putin's Russia, there is often a portrayal of a totally authoritarian ruler, who is above seeking the approval of his citizens due to his total power. The actual situation is more nuanced. This section will focus on how Putin maintains support of the Russian public and prevents rebellion.

Regina Smyth argues that the Putin regime has needed to constantly change and adapt strategies in order to control competition from opposition and maintain support.[98] Putin has used the power of the Russian state's repressive apparatus to conquer political opponents. However, Putin is also highly concerned with his own public perception amongst Russians. He is a reader of opinion polls, and keeps track of his approval ratings.

In Russia, informal and formal institutions coexist. Patronal politics in Russia exist through "hierarchical personal networks through which political power is generated and exercised."[99] These hierarchical networks are often able to function due to the existence of a dominant actor who can work as a broker and/or arbiter between competing networks. Samuel Greene writes that Russian economics is dominated by rent-seeking behavior, where individuals seek returns that concentrate rewards for themselves, while inflicting costs on the rest of

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[98] Smyth, Regina. *Elections, Protest, and Authoritarian Regime Stability : Russia 2008-2020*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. 33.

[99] Hale, Henry E. *Patronal Politics : Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

society.[100] In order for these networks to function, the dominant actor must be viewed as legitimate, and therefore remain unchallenged.[101] Putin has functioned as the dominant actor in Russia, and therefore is determined to remain legitimate. This quest for legitimacy includes a hyper-consciousness of his public image.

One method for maintaining his public image is through negotiating with the public and with "clusters of opinion" amongst the Russian elite.[102] These clusters consist of government officials, enterprises, think tanks, journalists and more. The most important individuals have ties to the military, the Orthodox Church, the technocratic liberals, and the Communist Party.

In the early years of Putin's presidency he desired to both increase the sovereign power of the Russian state, while still participating in the liberal international community. In order to achieve this duality, Putin's authority in these early years rested less on his protection of traditional Russian values, as it will later on, but instead on the Russian constitution. This liberal identity can be seen in Russia's economic policies of the time, seeking membership in the World Trade Organization and collaborating with the United States in its efforts in Afghanistan.
In 2004, Putin began to shift away from this liberal, international identity towards a more isolationist Russia. This new policy was referred to as "sovereign democracy." This new system placed a larger emphasis on Russian culture and traditions, while Russia remained a part of European civilization. In 2012 however, Putin took a larger leap toward this sovereign identity. This leap was largely due to the widespread protests that occurred when Putin regained his role

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[100] Greene, Samuel. "How Much Can Russia Really Change? The Durability of Networked Authoritarianism." PONARS Eurasia, July 23, 2012. https://www.ponarseurasia.org/how-much-can-russia-really-change-the-durability-of-networked-authoritarianism/.
[101] Richter, James. "Taming the Revolution: The Politics of Memory One Hundred Years after October." *History and memory* 31, no. 2 (2019), 50
[102] Laruelle, Marlene. "The Kremlin's Ideological Ecosystems: Equilibrium and Competition." PONARS Eurasia, November 14, 2017. https://ponarseurasia.org/the-kremlin-s-ideological-ecosystems-equilibrium-and-competition/.

as president. Putin felt that his authority was on shaky ground and wished to delegitimize the liberal, cosmopolitan beliefs held by many protesters. One significant strategy for this was through the politicization of Russian national identity.[103]

Putin portrays Russia as engaged in an ideological battle, with traditional Russian beliefs being threatened by a modern, globalized world. This set of beliefs and traditions are the basis of Russian national identity, and presents a great danger if they are threatened. Putin uses traditional, conservative Russian values to unite the Russian people. Two examples of this are laws on Religious sentiment and Anti-lgbtq legislation[104]. The religious sentiment law resulted after performances by the group "Pussy Riot" in key religious sites in Russia. The Kremlin saw a chance to villainize the performers, and more importantly, rally the people around the cause of protecting religion. The second uniting issue was laws restricting the rights of LGBTQ people. This issue appealed to conservative values and the importance placed on the traditional family. These two issues not only rallied the majority, they also isolated the opposition, who were influenced by trends in the rest of Europe[105]. The isolation of the opposition was an intentional mission by the Kremlin to lessen the probability of a united front against Russia[106].

This portrayal could not be possible without Putin's monopolization of the media. Putin's most ardent supporters are often everyday citizens who help to co-construct Putin's power through tactics such as encouraging their colleagues to vote. Through this co-construction, support of Putin becomes a societal norm.

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[103] Richter, James. "Taming the Revolution: The Politics of Memory One Hundred Years after October." *History and memory* 31, no. 2 (2019): 46.
[104]Greene, Samuel A., and Graeme B. Robertson. *Putin v. the People : The Perilous Politics of a Divided Russia*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019. 36.
[105] Ibid.,
[106] Ibid.,

Civic Activism in Russia:

In the three decades following the collapse of the Soviet Union, civic activism has evolved hand in hand with the changing political climate. McIntosh Sundstrom, Henry and Sperling theorize that activism in Russia has shifted from professional, NGO based movements to more informal organizing assisted by social media platforms.[107] The authors believe that this shift can be attributed to limiting political freedoms, a decline in foreign funding, and the availability of web-based methods of communication and fundraising technologies. In the 1990's, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, civic activism was based less on protest and more on an emphasis on lobbying. Activists were encouraged to apply for grants from Western European and North American countries who wished to grow democracy in Russia through their support of NGOs. Foreign aid allowed for the formation of several new NGOs in the 1990's and early 2000's. However, given the unpredictable nature of the state, it was a difficult terrain for activists to navigate. These conditions prevented NGOs from attracting citizen members, and halted collaboration between organizations.[108]

The end of the early 2000's corresponded with a shift in Russian civic activism. There has been a "mass exodus of foreign funding," over the past few decades. This was related to a number of factors, including an effort by Putin to limit foreign influence through policies such as the 2007 Law on Foreign Agents, and in particular its amended version in 2012, as well as the 2012 expulsion of USAID. It is significant that these policies take place in Putin's third term, in

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[107]McIntosh Sundstrom, Lisa, Laura A Henry, and Valerie Sperling. "The Evolution of Civic Activism in Contemporary Russia." *East European politics and societies* 36, no. 4 (2022).
[108] Ibid.,

the aftermath of the 2012 protests. The Law on Foreign Agents was largely seen as a reaction to the 2012 protests, which Putin posited was instigated by foreign governments. Other laws were passed in the aftermath of the protests which allowed for the Russian government to have a tighter grip on civil society.[109]

This new normal led to the eradication of many independent, organized NGOs in Russia, as they could no longer be maintained.[110] This lack of money has caused activists to have to adapt. Many organizations have had to give up their physical headquarters, and begin to rely only on volunteer labor. Many organizations chose to shed their label as an NGO in order to avoid suspicion, and instead become more informal. This informality allows for the network to work more freely, without constant scrutiny about being a foreign agent from the government. Through this shift, activists have focused less on funding and more on social outreach. This social outreach is possible through the presence of social media as a tool for activism. Individual activists can use social media as a tool for finding other sympathetic individuals, building support for their cause and activities, and publicizing their progress.[111]

While there is often a stereotype that Russians are apathetic or unwilling out of fear to participate in civic activism, survey results show that a good proportion of Russians are willing and interested in participating in civic activism. In a survey of post-communist nations, Russian citizens ranked second only to Czech respondents in the percentage of participants in civic activities at 32%. In a survey asking Russian citizens why they choose to participate in civic activities, the most popular answer was “to help someone in a group in need” at 32%. The second

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[109] Ibid.,

[110] McIntosh Sundstrom, Lisa, Laura A Henry, and Valerie Sperling. “The Evolution of Civic Activism in Contemporary Russia.” *East European politics and societies* 36, no. 4 (2022).

[111] Ibid.,

most popular answer was “to address a local concern or issue” at 25%. The least popular options were to support “a national government or a government policy” or a “local government or government policy.” These two choices polled at 1.6% and 2.2% respectively.[112] When citizens were asked what issues would spark citizen participation, the most common answers were the environment at 48% and human rights at 36%. Fascinatingly, the traditional values that Putin takes so much effort to promote ranked at the bottom. Religion only polled at 1%, while national identity only garnered 2% of the vote. This could be because citizens feel that these issues are well-protected by the government, and unlikely to come under attack. One theory for Russian protest tendencies is that Russian citizens are more likely to mobilize for issues that affect everyday life, such as neighborhood issues, domestic violence and reductions in government welfare benefits. This connects to the idea of activism starting at the micro level of the household or neighborhood community, where trusted individuals share grievances with each other. When these micro level organizations become connected and form social networks, there is a possibility for wider scale political protest.

In Russia, the government actively works to limit political opportunity. An example of this is in Irina Meyer-Olimpieva’s research on a bill which raised the retirement age in Russia in 2018. The bill was wildly unpopular amongst Russians, with 90% of polled Russians, disagreeing with raising the retirement age.[113] The Russian government likely anticipated this discontent and took several steps to limit political opportunities for protest. First, the introduction of a new pension system was introduced rapidly; it took four months for the system to be

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[112] Ibid.,

[113] Meyer-Olimpieva, Irina. “Manipulating Public Discontent in Russia: The Role of Trade Unions in the Protests Against Pension Reform .” In *Varieties of Russian Activism: State-Society Contestation in Everyday Life*, edited by Jeremy Morris , Andrei Semenov, and Regina Smyth, Bloomington , Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2023. 235.

introduced. Meyer-Olimpieva argues that this is in contrast to how the introduction of a new pension system would play out in a democracy, where time would be given for public debate.[114] The Russian government fast tracked the introduction, to deny the opportunity for public debate. In addition, the new system was rolled out while the 2018 World Cup was being held in Russia. This mass event had led to a ban to all rallies, further limiting the potential for protest.[115]

The Role of Social Media in Activist Networks:

While an important part of framing occurs during face-to-face interactions, the use of social networking sites is becoming an increasingly crucial tool for activists. Jeremy Morris argues that internet activism and in person activism reinforce each other. Activists' use of social media allows them to reach more people, with activists from different Russian cities being able to connect online. Additionally, in Russia's turbulent political climate, online activism keeps activists' momentum going as in person opportunities for activism wax and wane.[116]

Russian activism takes part across a variety of sites, with activists shifting across platforms. The main platforms used are VKontakte, Facebook, Youtube, Telegram, and twitter.[117] Facebook, Youtube and Tiktok are international sites, while Vkontakte and Telegram are Russian sites. There is more state surveillance on the Russian sites, and therefore are less preferred by

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[114] Ibid.,

[115] Ibid.,

[116] Ibid., 287.

[117] Morris , Jeremy, Andrei Semenov , and Regina Smyth. "Everyday Activism: Tracking the Evolution of Russian State and Society Relations ." In *Varieties of Russian Activism: State-Society Contestation in Everyday Life* , edited by Regina Smyth, Andrei Semenov , and Jeremy Morris , 1–29. Bloomington, Indiana : Indiana University Press , 2023. 11.

activists. However, since the invasion of Ukraine, Facebook and Twitter have both been banned by the Russian government, so activists have had to shift to using Russian sites.[118]

Guzel Yusapova's study on ethnic language activism in Russia shows the important role of social media in grassroots activism. In Yusapova's study, opportunities for in person activism were severely limited by threats from the state, as well as the state denying their application for protests.[119] The movement was forced, for the time being, to shift online. Yusapova argues that online connection happens two ways. In some cases, activists who meet at in person events later connect online when there is a limitation on in person opportunities, and they use the internet to sustain their connection. Secondly, activists met through the internet and seeing each other's posts.[120]

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[118] Glazunova, Sofya, and Malmi Amadoru. "'Anti-Regime Influentials' Across Platforms: A Case Study of the Free Navalny Protests in Russia." *Media and Communication* 11, no. 3 (2023): *Gale Academic OneFile* (accessed March 16, 2024). https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A779352519/AONE?u=bates_main&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=bba9a65a.

[119] Yusupova, Gazel. "The Promotion of Minority Languages in Russia's Ethnic Republics: Social Media and Grassroots Activities." In *Varieties of Russian Activism: State-Society Contestation in Everyday Life*, edited by Jeremy Morris , Andrei Semenov, and Regina Smyth. Bloomington , Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2023. 61.

[120] Ibid.,

Case Studies

2011-2013 Protests Russia:

In order to craft my argument, I will focus on the three protests highlighted in my introduction. The first protest I will focus on is the For Fair Elections Protest which occurred following the 2011-2012 elections and Putin's return to the presidency. From 2008-2012, Putin stepped aside as president, and stood as Prime Minister for Dimitry Medvedev. However, in 2011 Putin announced he would be running for president. In the Russian public, the move was referred to as the *rokirovka,* which is a chess move when the king swaps places with a rook.[121] In the wake of this announcement, the Russian public grew frustrated with the Kremlin's continued control of the election process, and the suppression of opposition parties. Civil society organizations joined forces with the opposition to closely monitor the upcoming parliamentary election, to try to uncover any voter fraud. Over 400,000 trained volunteers participated as election monitors in the 2012 election.[122] While the party of United Russia failed to win the vote, the Kremlin falsified election results.[123] Through election monitoring, as well as word of mouth, the election fraud was uncovered.

This scandal led to a number of protests in the winter of 2011 and spring of 2012. This period of time is sometimes referred to as the "snow revolution." Peaceful protests occurred in Moscow and the rest of the country throughout December of 2011, with both December Moscow

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[121] Smyth, Regina. *Elections, Protest, and Authoritarian Regime Stability : Russia 2008-2020*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. 5.
[122] Ibid., 112.
[123] Ibid.,

rallies attracting over 25,000 participants. While the Putin government allowed for these demonstrations to take place, they took measures to attempt to limit attendance. This includes warnings about possible illness being transmitted from mass gatherings, and a mandatory exam for students grade 9-11 being scheduled during the protest.[124]

Despite these countermeasures, there was still a massive turnout. Crowds chanted slogans such as "Putin is a thief" and "Russia without Putin!" These rallies were overseen by a large police presence, such as helicopters, dump trucks, and bulldozers, however no detentions were reported at the scene.[125] Putin attempted to portray these rallies as products of foreign interference. He said that then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had triggered the events, through her public criticism of the parliamentary elections.[126]

On May 6th, 2012, activists of the extra-parliamentary opposition scheduled a rally to protest the election results at Bolotnaya Square, a location which was approved by the city authorities. Bolotnaya Square is a large park-like square in the center of Moscow. An individual in the towers of the Kremlin could easily look outside and gaze upon the square. The central location makes it an easy location to police, and city authorities would regularly reroute other protests to take place in the square.[127]

The formal organizers of the event had chosen to title it "The Million-Strong March" or "The March of Millions." While previous protests against the election had been decentralized,

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[124] Schwirtz, Michael. "Russia Allows Protest, but Tries to Discourage Attendance." The New York Times, December 9, 2011. https://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/10/world/europe/russia-allows-rally-but-discourages-attendance.html?action=click&module=RelatedCoverage&pgtype=Article&region=Footer.

[125] Barry, Ellen. "Rally Defying Putin's Party Draws Tens of Thousands." The New York Times, December 10, 2011. https://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/11/world/europe/thousands-protest-in-moscow-russia-in-defiance-of-putin.html.

[126] Smyth, Regina. *Elections, Protest, and Authoritarian Regime Stability : Russia 2008-2020*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. 112.

[127] Gabowitsch, Mischa. *Protest in Putin's Russia*. Cambridge, UK ; Polity Press, 2017. 5.

and took place across Russia, for these events, protesters were encouraged to travel to Moscow to take part. Participants used all methods of transportation, such as plane, train or hitching rides with other protesters. The social media site vkontakte served as the site for protesters to communicate. Vk was modeled after Facebook but has overtaken its inspiration in users in the Russian-speaking world. Users on vk organized motorcades which would travel to Moscow for the protests.[128] Fundraising efforts also helped buy train tickets for willing participants who were unable to pay. Once protesters arrived in Russia, many Moscow residents opened up their homes to accommodate the protesters free of charge.

There is no clear consensus on how many protesters attended the event. The police quoted the number at 8,000, while the BBC quoted 20,000. One land surveyor estimated 60,000. All parties, from the organizers to the police, felt shocked at the high turnout.

Some participants belonged to specific political groups such as environmentalists, LGBT advocates, left wing activists and more. These individuals heavily advertised their cause through the use of banners, buttons, posters and more. The majority of protesters however were not affiliated with a specific group and their only garb was a white ribbon, which became the symbol of the electoral protests. Alongside the press were citizen reporters, who documented the events using their phones and posting the footage on social media.[129]

The initial atmosphere of the march was calm, with protesters moving at a leisurely pace. There were a few chants which were used such as “thieves and crooks, you have five minutes to pack your things” and “we are the power!” These chants were largely modeled after the rhetoric

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[128] Ibid.,

[129]Ibid., 6.

of opposition figure Alexei Navalny. The majority of protesters were less interested in chanting, but instead in conversing with other protesters.

The first sign of real trouble arrived two hours into the march when protesters attempted to cross the Lesser Stone Bridge which led them to Bolotnaya Square. A bottleneck formed on the bridge as the police force "OMON" attempted to restrict access to the main section of the square. Some well known activists such as Alexei Navalny and Ilya Yashin conducted a sit-in in front of the police lines.[130] This sit-in further clogged the bridge. When protesters attempted to bypass the police officers, the protesters were forcefully pushed back leading to violent clashes. Some protesters, usually on the younger side, chose to fight back. These protesters were cheered on by the crowd as they tore the helmets off OMON officers and threw them into the canal. The mayhem was furthered by the presence of Kremlin sponsored youth groups who fuelled further conflict.[131] OMON responded quickly and began to apprehend both violent and peaceful protesters out of the crowd. When an individual was apprehended they were taken by OMON and handed off to other police units. These units would then take the protester into a police van, where they were then transported to a police station in Moscow. The OMON officers were eventually able to get the situation under control, and protesters were herded back across the Lesser Stone Bridge to the nearest metro station.

In the end 650 individuals were arrested[132]. It was the largest protest in Russia since the 1990s. The crowd consisted of a similar crowd to the 1990s: students, urban middle class, nationalists. There were also business people and civil servants joining in - outside of the usual

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[130] Ibid.,
[131]Ibid.,
[132] Ibid.,

crowd.[133] The different actors included political parties, extra-parliamentary opposition groups, unaffiliated civic protesters and grassroots protesters. In this diverse set of actors, there was disagreement about the aims of the protests. The radicals and moderates disagreed about whether Putin should be ousted from office, or if the electoral system simply needed to be reformed. There was also the problem of who should be the spokesperson for such a diverse group. Any attempt at organizing a leadership structure for the movement was short lived. Instead, leadership and representation came less from being appointed within the protest movement, but instead from individuals gaining traction on social media and becoming "media celebrities." Alexei Navalny was an example of a highly visible figure during the protests. Navalny held a popular blog at the time of the protests, and he was attempting to transform his online community into a stable base of offline support.[134]

This protest movement, and the other Russian protest movements which accompanied it in the span of years from 2010-2014 existed within a wider global context of protest movements. During this time span there was also the Arab Spring, the Occupy movement, the European anti-austerity protests, Turkey's Gezi Park protests and Ukraine's Euromaidan. These protest movements gained more media attention and had more participation than the Russian movement.[135]

Within Russia, however, the 2012 protests and specifically the "March of Millions" served as a crucial turning point. A line was drawn on how far Russian's were able to push their complaints before they received brutal backlash. Additionally, any hope of stopping Putin's

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[133] Smyth, Regina. 2021. *Elections, Protest, and Authoritarian Regime Stability : Russia 2008-2020*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 5

[134] Gabowitsch, Mischa. *Protest in Putin's Russia*. Cambridge, UK ; Polity Press, 2017. 8.

[135] Ibid.,

inauguration was distinguished. Throughout the past few months with the protest waves, many Russians had experienced a sense of unity with their fellow compatriots. Due to the Russian state's monopolization of the media, Russian citizens were rarely exposed to different viewpoints and many felt alone in their feelings of discontent towards the government.[136] The protests gave a forum for Russian's to not only express their grievances towards the state, but also to each other and unite over shared feelings of frustration and injustice. Participating in the protests gave participants a newfound sense of agency that they had not found during standard electoral cycles in Russia. Following the May 6th protests, new demonstrations and shows of solidarity continued. Many of these showed support to the protesters arrested during May 6th. However, by the summer of 2012 many protesters began to lose steam and feel disillusioned by the lack of tangible change.

Not only was there a lack of tangible change, the largest visible legacy of the 2011-2012 protest movement was a crackdown on democratic practices such as freedom of speech. Following the May 6th protests, a new set of laws restricting freedom of assembly were passed.[137] These laws promised large penalties for protesters for minor violations. Additionally, in 2012, it was decided by a Russian judge that single person pickets could be charged as an assembly. With these new restrictions in place, protesters had to adapt. Many organizers began "protest walks," which were an attempt at skirting around the new guidelines. The sixth Duma, the government whose election which had been the source of so much protest, began to be referred to as the 'mad printer' for the pace at which new legislation was passed.

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[136] Ibid.,
[137] Ibid., 12.

Alexei Navalny: Support and Protests:

The second protest movement I want to focus on is in relation to support of opposition leader Alexei Navalny. This includes an examination of how Navalny creates support in his presidential campaign in 2017-2018, and a look at protests in 2021 after his arrest.

Alexei Navalny has been Putin's fiercest opponent since Putin took office in Russia in 1999. Navalny has shied away from the label of "dissident" and instead has wanted to be a politician and a future president of Russia. Navalny was a teenager during the collapse of the Soviet Union, which initially piqued his interest in politics. Navalny got his start in local politics in Moscow. Navalny rose in popularity for his leading role in the 2011 protest movements, where he famously branded Putin's political party United Russia, as "the party of crooks and thieves." Navalny's political campaigns, first for mayor of Moscow and later for president, were based on helping average Russians solve everyday injustices, such as housing and infrastructure failures. Fighting corruption has also been a common thread throughout his political career.[138] Before his return to Russia in 2021, Navalny created a video exposing a billionaire palace owned by Putin, in an effort to expose the corruption by the president. The video was watched by more than 100 million people.[139] Leonid Volkov, the director of Navalny's 2018 presidential campaign said that

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[138] "How Alexei Navalny Became Putin's Biggest Nightmare and Why He's Different from His Previous Enemies." *CE Noticias Financieras*, Jan 30. https://www.proquest.com/wire-feeds/how-alexei-navalny-became-putins-biggest/docview/2484222161/se-2

[139] "Russia: Navalny, an Unexpected Challenge for Putin." *CE Noticias Financieras*, Feb 02. https://www.proquest.com/wire-feeds/russia-navalny-unexpected-challenge-putin/docview/2486119186/se-2.

the goal of Navalny's political movement was to "turn Russia into a normal European country with a rule of law and independent courts and free media."[140]

Navalny is also well known for his dry sense of humor and mockery, which has often appealed to the Russian people. In a recently released letter written after being transferred to a penal colony in the Arctic, Navalny wrote "I am your new father frost" in reference to the Russian version of Santa Claus.[141]

In December of 2016, Navalny announced that he would be running for president. In anticipation of the election, his campaign chief strategist recruited and trained 1000 electoral observers. In addition, he set a fundraising goal of 150-200 rubles (between $2.5-3 million USD), and established 27 regional offices.[142] The campaign drew inspiration from Barack Obama's presidential campaign in its use of digital tools for recruitment and coordination. Additionally, with the campaign's money, they were able to hire professional staff, such as lawyers, coordinators and media professionals.

Navalny has had an ability to mobilize support and encourage people to protest. In January of 2018, several thousand Russian's protested the upcoming March elections, encouraged by Navalny after he was barred from running for office due to charges of embezzlement. In March of 2017, over 20,000 took to the streets to protest corruption, Navalny

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[140] "How Alexei Navalny Became Putin's Biggest Nightmare and Why He's Different from His Previous Enemies." *CE Noticias Financieras*, Jan 30. https://www.proquest.com/wire-feeds/how-alexei-navalny-became-putins-biggest/docview/2484222161/se-2

[141] Nechepurenko, Ivan. "In Letter Heavy with Irony, Navalny Describes Transfer to Arctic Prison." The New York Times, December 26, 2023. https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/26/world/europe/navalny-russia-prison-letter.html.

[142] Dollbaum , Jan Matti, Elena Sirotkina , and Andrei Semenov. "Active Urbanites in an Authoritarian Regime ." Essay. In *Varieties of Russian Activism: State-Society Contestation in Everyday Life*, edited by Jeremy Morris , Andrei Semenov, and Regina Smyth,. Bloomington , Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2023. 259.

led the charge there as well. Many Russians feel that a large part of the failure of the 2012 protest movement could be attributed to a lack of a leader. Since then, Navalny has emerged as a clear leader for the opposition.

However, despite his high visibility, Navalny is a controversial character in Russia. In a Russian poll, 49% of Russians were reported as having a negative view on Navalny, in contrast to 25% having a positive view. While 78% of Russian's have heard something about Navalny's poisoning, only 15% believe it was carried out by the Russian government. This poll also shows that Navalny gains much of his support from younger supporters, with 48% of 18-24 year olds having a favorable view on the politician. It also matters which news site Russians are using, as 49% of individuals who use the news application Telegram have a favorable opinion.[143]

The role of social media is also important for understanding support for Navalny. Navalny himself uses social media as an important tool for spreading information. He is a user of many social media platforms, such as Vkontakte, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Youtube. It is estimated that 42% of young Russians spend between 3-5 hours per day on the internet. Young people also use social networking sites 5-6 times more than older generations.[144] Navalny uses social media as a key way to galvanize support for the opposition. Following his arrest, the hashtag #FreeNavalny was viewed 682.5 million times on Tik Tok. 41% of users of Tiktok in Russia are reported as having a favorable opinion on Navalny. This is larger than the reported number of 27% for users of the Russian social media site Odnoklassniki.

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[143] Smeltz, Dina. "In Russia, Navalny Inspires Respect for Some, Indifference for Most." Chicago Council on Global Affairs, February 22, 2021. https://globalaffairs.org/research/public-opinion-survey/russia-navalny-inspires-respect-some-indifference-most.

[144] Demydova, Viktoriia. "Alexei Navalny and Protests in Russia: Growth of Online Activism Under the Authoritarian System." *Gaziantep University Journal of Social Sciences* 20, no. 4 (October 29, 2021). 1979.

Following Nalvany's arrest in 2021, more than 100 protests in Russia were organized, in more than 100 cities[145] The locations of these protests were spread across the vast country, from Siberia to Tatarstan. This geographical diversity shows the reach in Navalny's movement, and that it is not just centered in Moscow or St. Petersburg.

The protests were also accompanied by increased police violence. More than 5,000 people were detained across the country. In some protests, plain clothed operatives were seen grabbing protesters. In other cities, police used electric shocks and pepper sprays to subdue protesters. Police demanded many people to show their identification documents, which they photographed. These photographs could be used to charge individuals with participation in an unauthorized protest. The majority of protesters were peaceful. In many cities, city governments attempted to seal off potential areas for protests. In Ulan Ude and Kostroma areas were shut off due to a need to spray for ticks. In Yekaterinburg, a military parade was scheduled. The protests were still able to go on, but in some cities the locations had to be changed.[146] Protesters held signs and performed chants such as "Freedom to political prisoners," "Putin Go Away," and "Russia Without Corruption."

In addition to protesters being detained, at least 50 members of Navalny's team were arrested in the spring of 2021. Two of Navalny's aides were arrested and charged for encouraging people to attend protests in support of Navalny.[147]

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[145]Ibid., 1980.

[146] "Russia: Arbitrary Detentions at Pro-Navalny Protests." Human Rights Watch, April 22, 2021. https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/04/22/russia-arbitrary-detentions-pro-navalny-protests.

[147] Ibid.,

Protests After Full Scale Invasion of Ukraine:

The third and final protest I will look at is the protest against the war in Ukraine. In the hours and days following the invasion of Ukraine, anti-war sentiments and protests in Russia were widespread. Members of various Russian communities including journalists, lawyers, doctors, scientists, writers and artists wrote open letters disagreeing with the choice to invade Ukraine. The number of donations to nonprofit organizations, specifically those supporting Ukrainian citizens increased, as did the number of individual donations to affected citizens of Ukraine.[148] On social media, the hashtag #nowar was used in 83 Russian regions and 50 cities spread across the country.

In the period between January 2022 and Mid-February 2023, ACLED recorded just over 1,200 protests occurring related to the invasion. These protests can be peaceful or violent in nature, and accounted for "symbolic protests" such as laying down flowers, which ended in arrest.[149] During this time period, 73% of protests in Russia were related to the invasion. An estimated 9 out of 10 protests organized against the war were met with arrests and police brutality. In February and March of 2022 respectively, 92 and 98 percent of anti-war protests were met with police violence, beatings and arrest. In this two month time period, the authorities arrested 15,351 individuals for protesting against the war. Since the start of the war, around 19,589 individuals have been arrested.[150] These detention have taken place across Russia and Crimea, in 226 different cities. In addition to arrests at anti-war rallies, there have been 154

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[148] "No to War." ОВД-Инфо, March 14, 2022. https://en.ovdinfo.org/no-to-war-en#1.
[149]Tertytchnaya, Katerina "Russian Protests Following the Invasion of Ukraine." PONARS Eurasia, April 15, 2023. https://www.ponarseurasia.org/russian-protests-following-the-invasion-of-ukraine/.
[150] Ibid.,

detentions for anti-war posts on social media, 126 detentions for anti-war symbolics, and 229 detentions which took place in the aftermath of an anti-war protest. Police used a facial recognition system to make arrests during the days of mass rallies. Activists were detained in the Moscow Metro after the use of the facial recognition system. In reaction to the protests, 29 new repressive laws have been drafted by lawmakers since the start of the war. An example of the use of Russian law against individuals is seen in a woman who was charged under the "Dadin Clause" for setting up a solitary picket in protest of the war. In contrast, during the 536 protests organized in support of the war, only one demonstrator was arrested.

In addition to arrests, 30 known students have been expelled from their universities due to their anti-war stance. This includes 17 students at the Islamic University in Chechnya who refused to participate in a rally in support of the annexation of Ukrainian territories to Russia.[151] Professionals who wrote and signed open letters risked expulsion from their place of work. The homes of activists, human rights defenders and journalists were searched. A total of 129 individuals and organizations have been given the "foreign agent" status since the beginning of the war. By being marked as foreign agents, they have simultaneously been declared anti-Russian.

The civil society organization Dekabristen e.V. was assigned the "undesirable organization" status. Dekabristen e.V. is a ngo which provides aid to civil society in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucuses. The organization has publicly opposed the war in Ukraine. It is the one of 16 organizations which has been declared "undesirable" since February

[151] Текст на русском. "Wartime Repressions Report. Eight Months of War. October 2022." ОВД-Инфо. Accessed December 11, 2023. https://oi.legal/instruction/wartime-repressions-report-eight-months-war-october-2022#3.

of 2022.[152] According to RosKomSvoboda, in the month of October 2022 alone, the Russian government has blocked over 20,000 media resources. Independent media, including journalists have come under pressure for reporting on mobilization by Russian citizens against the war. In October 2022, three journalists were arrested for reporting on mobilization in Belgorod and Tver.[153] The Federal Financial Monitoring Service and the Ministry of Justice put Meta (the platform in charge of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp) on their list of terrorists and extremists. Many media outlets have stopped reporting due to a fear of a law which calls for 15 years in prison for individuals charged with spreading false information about the actions of the Russian armed forces.[154] Media outlets were also informed that they could only use data and information that was obtained from official Russian sources, or risk a fine. Media outlets were also punished and restricted for using the term "attack" or "invasion" instead of the mandated term "special military operation."[155]

Between March and April 2022, the number of anti-war protests declined by ten fold.[156] 536 protests were recorded to express support for the invasion, while 675 were recorded which opposed the invasion.[157] Other protests were related to the invasion, but unclear whether they were in support or in protest. Pro-war protests were largely in response to anti-war protests. These pro-war protests are organized by the authorities, civil society groups with close ties to the

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[152] Ibid.,

[153] Ibid.,

[154] Ibid.,

[155] Ibid.,

[156]Tertytchnaya, Katerina "Russian Protests Following the Invasion of Ukraine." PONARS Eurasia, April 15, 2023. https://www.ponarseurasia.org/russian-protests-following-the-invasion-of-ukraine/.

[157] Ibid.,

Kremlin and Russia's "loyal" opposition. These reactionary moves by them are seen in the fact that in February 2022 there was just one recorded protest showing support, in contrast to 225 protests in opposition. It was only in the months following did pro-war protests begin to occur.

These pro-war protests were accompanied by a number of other propaganda tactics by the Russian state. In the first days of the war, Russian schools received recommendations for teaching students in grade 7-11 about the war in Ukraine. These lessons served the purpose of conveying the government's reasoning for the invasion, as well as condemning the anti-war rallies. Further lesson plans have been sent out to educate students on "fake news," Anti-Russian sanctions and hybrid conflicts, as well as a lesson titled "heroes of our time" which focuses on the Russian military in Ukraine.[158] During this particular lesson, students were encouraged to advertise pro-war rallies on their social media. Additionally, the ministry of education held an open lesson where school children were told the dangers that NATO infrastructures pose to Russia. Similar talks have been held at Universities, and some universities such as Moscow State University have publicly supported the war.[159] Some students report being "herded" to a rally, leading them to unwillingly take part.

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[158] "No to War." ОВД-Инфо, March 14, 2022. https://en.ovdinfo.org/no-to-war-en#1.

[159] Ibid.,

Risk of Protest In Russia:

For Russians who disagree with the actions of their government, why do they choose not to protest and instead stay home? It is crucial to understand the tremendous risk attached to choosing to protest.

Russians who choose to protest against Putin risk not only defying social norms. Those who actively protest risk a wide range of consequences including arrest, loss of job, business or university place. Many Russians are dependent on the state for their payment through being state employees or beneficiaries. It was estimated in 2021 that 42% of the Russian population is dependent on the state for their income.

Protesters arrested have faced violence and harassment from police both on the streets and behind closed doors at jail houses. In 2022, there were an estimated 488 political prisoners, however human rights organizations estimate the number could be much more. Political prisoners in Russia are subjected to particularly harsh conditions, including solitary confinement and forced stays in psychiatric units. Between 2016 and 2018, the estimated prison sentence for a political prisoner increased from 5.3 years to 6.8.

When a Russian citizen is arrested they will be placed in a pre-trial detention center for an indeterminate amount of time - fifteen days is the norm for someone being arrested for the first time. Since the start of the war in Ukraine, the gender balance in Russia has shifted with the departure of men for the front. Due to this, many women are now solely responsible for looking after children and the elderly. Protesters who are arrested also worry about indirect reprisals against their loved ones.

There is also a sense of hopelessness which has been building in Russian activist circles since the 2011 protests. This hopelessness comes from a lack of tangible change, as well as increased repression from the state which makes protests harder to organize. There is a feeling that while lives cannot be improved through protest, they can be harmed. Many of the leading activists have left Russia in the years since 2011.

Methods:

Research Approach:

In looking at different protest movements, I want to look at the reasons for different protesters and activists to get involved. I did this through looking at individual testimonials from activists, as well as more overarching literature and quantitative studies. Searching for evidence was a challenge, given the nature of the material. In this authoritarian context, many people will not openly share their discontent.

In looking for individual testimonies, I searched a variety of different platforms for evidence. English language media sites such as the New York Times, The Guardian or The Washington Post at times proved helpful. These platforms are especially helpful for looking at profiles or interviews with high profile activists, many who have left Russia. With the war in Ukraine becoming a global news story, many news outlets have increased their coverage of Russian activism.

Another way that I found material is through looking at the Russian media. The majority of Russian media is controlled by the state and must fit the states narrative. Because of this, it is hard to find media which features activists. In looking into different media sites, I first wanted to see if I could find the blogs of any Russian activists, particularly from 2011-2012. Due to the harsh crackdown in 2012-2013, these blogs had been shut down. However, through this line of research I started reading about Anton Nossik. Nossik was a prominent Russian activist, and he is considered by many as the "godfather of the Russian internet." Nossik created many independent news sites, such as Vesti.ru and Gazeta.ru. I explored these news sites and others,

and found particular success with stories on sites such as republic.ru, meduza and ovdinfo. These sites regularly feature interviews and profiles with Russian activists. Another advantage of sites like these, is that there are opportunities to hear from Russians who are not high profile activists who have caught the attention of the foreign media, but still have chosen to participate. Using sources like these allows me to have a wider set of perspectives in my data.

In looking for first person accounts, I searched for sources with direct quotations. Second hand accounts of protests proved useful for gaining knowledge about the protests, but given that I wanted to analyze things such as individuals' emotional processes, I needed my sources to feature the voices of those at the protests. That is not to say that every source is derived from reporters going up to protesters with a microphone. While sources like this are very valuable, they are few and far between. I also relied on op-eds and interviews with activists. As long as their voice was being used, there was no requirement for time and place. Additionally, I used quantitative data from others research to help to look at factors such as past activist experience.

In looking at this evidence, I will see if there is a correlation between these individuals and the four factors I have identified. These four factors are moral emotions, ideological identification, biographical availability, and organizational and relational ties to social networks. In reading first person accounts, I will code for certain phrases that connect to these four factors, and how they connect to the overall literature. I will also look at the relationships between these factors. I will look at sources from a variety of perspectives. When looking from the perspectives of “everyday Russians” who are not opposition leaders, I will look directly at why they chose to participate, and what led them to this decision. However, when I look at sources from opposition leaders such as Navalny, I will look at how his rhetoric could appeal to these factors. For example, does he appeal to people’s moral emotions? One thing I needed to be conscious of

when going through these accounts was why the activist was saying what they were. When a person is interviewed, they are hyperconscious of what they are saying, and how it sounds. They may reach for certain buzzwords, and say what they feel makes them sound best, while not being completely honest about their motivations. There is no way to avoid this, especially considering I am not responsible for these interviews.

In addition to looking at these first person accounts, I will look at past literature on how the social networks around these specific protest movements were built. I looked at scholarly sources such as the writing of Regina Smyth, Samuel Greene, and Jan Matti Dollbaum. I also looked at sources by Russian journalists who are closely connected to resistance networks. In looking at this evidence, I will see how it fits into the existing theory around social networks in closed political structures.

I will also look for instances where what is being said contradicts my original theory. It is important to avoid bias, when approaching a set of data with an already established hypothesis. A possible counterargument that I will examine, is that an individual was not motivated by moral emotions, but instead because of personal or empathic anger.

A challenge I will likely have is looking at factors such as biographical availability, when for some of my case studies I will not have quantitative data that looks at factors such as age and gender. This problem will be especially relevant for the Ukraine war case study, given the recency of the events. I still feel that I can use biographical availability as a measure, by looking at how individuals talk about their own identity.

2011-2012 Evidence:

One of the main studies I looked at was a study conducted in 2012 by a group of researchers working at the European University in St. Petersburg, in collaboration with the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences of St. Petersburg State University. This study took over a hundred interviews with participants of the rallies.[160] Through this study, I was able to find quotations from protest participants, which proved extremely helpful for the analysis.

In looking in the building of social networks in the leadup to the protest I relied heavily on the existing literature by Regina Smyth, Samuel Greene, and Sarah Oates. In Regina Smyth's book *Elections, Protest, and Authoritarian Regime Stability: Russia 2008–2020,* she covers important information about the activist core which led to the protest, as well as biographical information about the protesters.[161] Regina Smyth and Sarah Oates collaborated together to write about different information sources in Russia in relation to the 2011-2012 protests.[162] This includes traditional state media, independent media and "table talk" or personal networks. Samuel Greene looked at the role of social media in the leadup to the protest.[163]

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[160] Zhuralev, Oleg, and Artemy Magun. "New Populism. Issues of Identity of the Protest Movement in Russia 2011-2012." Republic, December 27, 2012. https://republic.ru/posts/28143.

[161] Smyth, Regina. *Elections, Protest, and Authoritarian Regime Stability : Russia 2008-2020*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.

[162] Smyth, Regina, and Sarah Oates. "Mind the Gaps: Media Use and Mass Action in Russia." *Europe-Asia Studies* 67, no. 2 (2015): 285–305. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24537040.

[163] Greene, Samuel A. "Beyond Bolotnaia: Bridging Old and New in Russia's Election Protest Movement." *Problems of post-communism* 60, no. 2 (2013): 40–52.

Navalny Campaign and Protest Evidence:

In looking at evidence for the Navalny Campaign and 2021 protests, I will use both qualitative and quantitative research methods. In terms of qualitative sources, I rely heavily on interviews with members of the Navalny campaign, which were conducted by Jan Matti Dollbaum, Andrei Semenov and Elena Sirotkina.[164] These authors conducted twenty three interviews with members of Navalny's campaign staff, in seven regional offices. These interviews provided quotations, which could be used for my analysis. Additionally, I looked at Russian journalist and media activist Alexander Bidin's account of the activist network which helped to organize the protests.[165] Additionally, I looked at Sofya Glazunova and Malmi Amadoru's study of social media use during the 2021 Navalny protests. Glazunova and Amadoru used network analysis, social media analysis and qualitative research to identify opinion leaders in the 2021 movement.[166]

In terms of quantitative data, I looked at data collected in 2017-2018 by Jan Matti Dollbaum and Andrei Semenov.[167] The data was collected by randomly selecting members of pro-Navalny Vkontakte groups about their interest in Navalny and their involvement in his campaign. The respondents were divided into two categories, those who had worked on the

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[164] Dollbaum , Jan Matti, Elena Sirotkina , and Andrei Semenov. "Active Urbanites in an Authoritarian Regime ." In *Varieties of Russian Activism: State-Society Contestation in Everyday Life*, edited by Jeremy Morris , Andrei Semenov, and Regina Smyth, 51–70. Bloomington , Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2023.

[165] Bidin, Alexander. "This Is What It's like inside Russia's Anti-War Movement." openDemocracy, February 28, 2022. https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/ukraine-russia-anti-war-protest-movement-small-defiant/.

[166] Glazunova, Sofya, and Malmi Amadoru. "'Anti-Regime Influentials' Across Platforms: A Case Study of the Free Navalny Protests in Russia." *Media and Communication* 11, no. 3 (2023): . *Gale Academic OneFile* (accessed March 16, 2024). https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A779352519/AONE?u=bates_main&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=bba9a65a.

[167] Dollbaum, Jan Matti, and Andrei Semenov. "Navalny's Digital Dissidents: A New Dataset on a Russian Opposition Movement." *Problems of Post-Communism* 69 no. (2022): 282–91. doi:10.1080/10758216.2021.1893123.

campaign, and those who were online supporters only. From this point, a number of datapoints were collected from respondents, such as age, gender, and past activist experiences.

Ukraine War Invasion Protest Evidence:

Due to the recency of the events, there is a lack of scholarly sources related to the 2022 protests in the aftermath of the invasion of Ukraine. Due to this, the sources are primarily first hand accounts from protesters. In order to get these accounts, I turned to a variety of media sources, both Russian and international.

The main site where I started my research was republic.ru,[168] which is an online Russian analytical magazine which primarily covers politics, business and economics. This site has interviews with protesters. The online website is published by the Moscow Digital Media private company. I also looked at interviews and pieces from Cherta[169], a Russian news outlet managed by Ilya Panin, who manages the site while based abroad. Cherta Media proved a helpful resource finding interviews with activists and everyday citizens who were facing criminal charges for their work. I also looked at interviews from Svoboda[170], a multi-platform Russian media site, which is independent from state-controlled media. I also looked at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, which is a United States government funded media organization which broadcasts news in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Middle East. A blog that I looked at was the Russian Reader[171], which describes itself as "News and views of the other Russia(n)s."

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[168] Republic.ru. https://republic.ru/.
[169] Cherta.media. https://cherta.media/.
[170] Svoboda. https://www.svoboda.org/
[171] The Russian Reader. https://therussianreader.com/

Many of the sources from this site are from other independent Russian media sites and then translated into English. Additionally, I looked at OVD-Info[172], which is an independent media and human rights defense group which monitors repression in Russia. This site served as the best source for getting a full scope of the repression facing activists, as well as getting information about legal cases facing activists.

Along with looking for interviews from Russian media sites, I also found a fair amount of interviews from English language media sites. These sources are available due to the intense amount of international media coverage around the war and its effect on Russia. I found interviews and information on news sites such as Al Jazeera, BBC, Washington Post, Open Democracy and The Guardian.

[172] OVD Info, https://en.ovdinfo.org/

Analysis of Case Studies:

The following section will look in depth at the three protest movements, and how the factors of moral and reflex emotions, ideological identification, biographical availability, and social networks influenced individuals to protest. As time passes between the three movements, and the Russian state becomes more repressive, political opportunity and the role of social networks for recruitment has waned, and protesting has become more of an individual act based on ideological identification and moral emotions.

2011-2012 Protest Movements:

Introduction:

The 2011-2012 protest movement was a culmination of over half a decade's worth of movement formation, which was borne out of Russian citizens' dissatisfaction with the Russian state and their everyday lives. Over time, with the help of movement leaders, a vast social network was born, which used the internet as a connective tissue to unite individuals across the country. Putin's return to the presidency allowed for an opening of political opportunity. The *Rokirovka* sparked outrage, and a desire within many Russians to express this outrage through protest. Through the existence of the vast social network, Russians were able to become aware of protest opportunities, and feel confident that they would be joining a mass movement. Being part of a large group allows for feelings of solidarity and empowerment amongst protesters and helps to mitigate participants' fear or doubt.

This section will start by looking at the moral emotions of the movement, and how it was rooted in a call for "fairness" rather than political demands. I will then look at the emotions experienced by protesters, and how they were able to gain feelings of pride and dignity. Next, I will look at biographical availability as another factor to explain movement participation. Finally, I will examine the formation of the social networks in the leadup to the movement, and how the political process model's ideas of political opportunity and recruitment contribute to this. Ultimately, I argue that while the movement was based on moral emotions, it can best be explained by the merging of several social networks into collective action, which connects to the political process model of recruitment.

Moral Emotions:

This section will attempt to look at the role that moral emotions played in the decision making of the protesters. I argue that the For Free and Fair Elections Movement was rooted in moral outrage rather than political demands.

The title of the movement "For Fair Elections" shows that morality is at the core. One man interviewed shared that he thinks the movement has a moral rather than political basis. In his interview he shares, "The movement 'For Fair Elections' is good because it unites a lot of people. And if it is changed in some way to include some social or political demands, anything other than fair elections, this would just divide people. Some people would support some of the demands, some people are on the left, some are on the right, some are against private property, somebody wants something else, and so on. It would just divide people, it would not be such a

strong movement, and everything would die off" (Male, age 24, software developer).[173] Instead of a political backing to the movement, protesters are simply protesting for things to be "fair" vs "wrong". This connects to the idea in moral emotions that there are only two moral emotions, approval and condemnation[174], or thinking something is right vs wrong. This framing of the opposition as morally wrong is seen in Alexei Navalny's famous slogan for the protest, where he referred to Putin's party United Russia as "the party of crooks and thieves."[175]

During one protest, Navalny led chants where he asked the crowd, "who's the power here?" to which they replied, "we are!" During a protest in Moscow in 2011, participants chanted "we exist, we exist!" These claims of power and existence connect to Elizabeth Wood's theory of emotional in process benefits of protest, which give protesters feelings of dignity and pride, as well as the self realization which comes from protest.[176] The idea of dignity and protest was brought up by Alexei Navalny. After Navalny was arrested at a protest, he wrote an address from jail which was read out at the next protest. "Everyone has the single most powerful weapon that we need - dignity, and the feeling of self-respect."[177] He says in the address.

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[173] Laboratory of Public Sociology. "Where Is the Movement Going: The Identity of Russian Protest 2011-2012." Lefteast, November 7, 2014. https://lefteast.org/where-is-the-movement-going-russian-protest-2011-2012/.

[174] Prinz, Jesse. *The Emotional Construction of Morals*, Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2008. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/bates/detail.action?docID=415866. 34.

[175] Smyth, Regina. *Elections, Protest, and Authoritarian Regime Stability : Russia 2008-2020*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. 94.

[176] Wood , Elizabeth. "Peasant Political Mobilization in El Salvador: The Contribution of Emotional In-Process Benefits." In *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, edited by Francesa Polletta, James M. Jasper , and Jeff Goodwin. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press , 2001. 272.

[177] Barry, Ellen. "Rally Defying Putin's Party Draws Tens of Thousands." The New York Times, December 10, 2011. https://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/11/world/europe/thousands-protest-in-moscow-russia-in-defiance-of-putin.html.

Biographical Availability:

In the context of the 2011-2012 movement, certain biographical traits made someone more likely to protest. Scholars of Russian opposition movements such as Lyytikainen and Smyth argue that in the Russian context, opposition movements are gendered. Lyytikäinen argues that in the movement, gendered divisions of labor are not questioned, and that women are often relegated to domestic roles, such as making tea during meetings.[178] Due to these gender divisions, men are more likely to be engaged in protest.[179]

Additionally, an individual's career affects their ability to protest. Regina Smyth writes that the Russian state uses job security to pressure citizens into conforming to the demands of the regime. Individuals who are employed by the public sector or have another threat of employer retribution are less likely to participate in protests than those whose job is unlikely to come under threat.[180]

Social Networks:

This next section will look at the formation of social networks in the years leading up to the 2011-2012 protests. In the years of 2005-2011, the number of small activism groups increased due to a number of factors such as demands for solutions to local issues such as

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[178] Lyytikäinen, Laura. "Gendered and Classed Activist Identity in the Russian Oppositional Youth Movement." *The Sociological Review* 61, no. 3 (August 2013): https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954x.12063.
[179] Smyth, Regina. *Elections, Protest, and Authoritarian Regime Stability : Russia 2008-2020*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. 117.
[180] Rosenfeld, Bryn. "The Popularity Costs of Economic Crisis under Electoral Authoritarianism: Evidence from Russia." *American Journal of Political Science* 62, no. 2 (January 22, 2018): https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12338.

environmental degradation, historic preservation, land use, health and education reforms.[181] These new groups, Smyth argues, can be divided into three categories; non systemic opposition, apolitical issue based civic initiatives and labor activism.[182] The increase of these groups lead to increased political opportunity; Debra Minkoff argues that political opportunity structure becomes more favorable to protest as organization density increases.[183] This is due to an increase in available partners, skills and resources, as well as the movement having a broader reach to recruit unaligned citizens. The non systemic opposition and apolitical issue based civic initiatives were key in the leadup to the 2011-2012 protest.

The non systemic opposition group had been banned from systemic Russian politics by the year 2011, and they had been declared as radicals and revolutionaries. The formation of this opposition traces its roots back to Ukraine's 2004 Orange Revolution, which resulted in Russian youth beginning to organize against Putin.[184] Many of these organizations grew from existing political structures, such as the Yabloko parties youth group. While these different groups varied across the political spectrum, they were united through seeing Putin as the ultimate enemy. These groups include liberal, left-wing and ultranationalist individuals, who had lost access to formal pathways such as access to elections and state institutions. Due to this, they had to turn to extra institutional means.

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[181] Smyth, Regina. *Elections, Protest, and Authoritarian Regime Stability : Russia 2008-2020*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. 83.
[182] Ibid.,
[183] Minkoff, Debra C. "The Sequencing of Social Movements." *American Sociological Review* 62, no. 5 (October 1997): . https://doi.org/10.2307/2657360. 780.
[184] Smyth, Regina. *Elections, Protest, and Authoritarian Regime Stability : Russia 2008-2020*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. 83.

The apolitical issue based civic initiatives closely align with the theory presented by Karine Clement. These groups emerged often at the micro level, such as a household, neighborhood or town.[185] These groups are formed through a shared grievance, usually around local issues such as historic preservation or environmental protection.[186] In support of these issues, there was an increase in protest in the second half of Putin's first presidency. While these protests were not political in nature, they created networks and skills which could later be applied for mobilization.

In the lead up to the 2011 elections, the non-systemic opposition groups and apolitical initiatives began to become intertwined.[187] Members of the groups were able to connect and communicate with each other, and bond over shared grievances. This is due to factors such as the usage of social media, ties between activists and the networks of leaders. This connects to the literature by Karine Clement, who theorized that broader coalitions are formed through leaders of small groups building larger coalitions through playing the role of social integrator. Leaders are able to facilitate connections through their good reputation in society and social capital.[188] Another way that networks were created were through friendships across different activist groups. Stoecker argues that linkages between different groups are the result of informal ties

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[185] Karine Clément (2008) New Social Movements in Russia: A Challenge to the Dominant Model of Power Relationships?, Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics, 24:1,, DOI: 10.1080/13523270701840472. 74.

[186] Smyth, Regina. *Elections, Protest, and Authoritarian Regime Stability : Russia 2008-2020*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. 83.

[187] Ibid.,

[188] Karine Clément (2008) New Social Movements in Russia: A Challenge to the Dominant Model of Power Relationships?, Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics, 24:1, 68-89, DOI: 10.1080/13523270701840472. 74.

between activists, who share everyday experiences.[189] These networks would often share safe spaces to meet and discuss, with Jean Jacques restaurant in Moscow being a common spot for youth political activists to meet.[190] These organizations and their history before the protest movement allowed for the growth of intimate ties between activists.

The 2011 and 2012 elections in Russia served to increase political opportunity. As Doug McAdam theorizes, social movements often emerge during periods of political and economic transition.[191] However, given the non-democratic characteristics of the regime, despite increased political opportunity there was a lack of formal pathways for enacting change. Due to this, Regina Smyth argues, the opposition is limited to using extra institutional actions outside of politics to enact change[192]

This section will look specifically at the online spaces, and how they contributed to the massive turnout at the protests. Similarly to Regina Smyth, Samuel Greene argues that the 2011-2012 movement was a result of existing groups becoming linked together to create a mobilized force.[193] Greene argues that these linkages occurred predominantly online, with activists and politically interested Russians turning to independent media sites over traditional, state

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[189] Stoecker, Randy. "Community, Movement, Organization: The Problem of Identity Convergence in Collective Action." *The Sociological Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (January 1, 1995): https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.1995.tb02323.x. 116.
[190] Smyth, Regina. *Elections, Protest, and Authoritarian Regime Stability : Russia 2008-2020*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. 84.
[191] McAdam, Doug. "Conceptual Origins, Current Problems, Future Direction." In *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, edited by Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 26.
[192] Smyth, Regina. *Elections, Protest, and Authoritarian Regime Stability : Russia 2008-2020*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. 78.
[193] Greene, Samuel A. "Beyond Bolotnaia: Bridging Old and New in Russia's Election Protest Movement." *Problems of post-communism* 60, no. 2 (2013). 40.

controlled Russian media. He argues that twitter and other social media was used to collect and aggregate information, spread mobilizational messages, and reinforce community solidarity.[194] Samuel Greene conducted research on Russian facebook users involved in the protest movement. These users were identified through their presence in an online activist community, and in an online alternative media community. Greene looked at different groups on facebook which were connected to the movement. He identified two different categories of activism groups. First, groups that were present before the protest wave, which he referred to as legacy groups, and second, groups which had been created as part of the protest wave, which he referred to as greenfield groups.[195]

Legacy groups were existing organizations, which are connected to the different organizations introduced by Regina Smyth. The greenfield groups had been created explicitly for the protest and had names such as "We were at Bolotnaya Square and We will Return." Mischa Gabowitsch argues that these groups were created by prominent activists and media presences at the time, which can contribute to the rapid growth of these groups.[196] These two groups comprise two networks. When looking at which networks have more members, it shows that the greenfield network has ten times the number of members as the legacy network. However, Greene argues that members of legacy networks had more intimate ties to one another than members of the greenfield network. Members of different legacy groups knew each other personally and have often collaborated in the past. This history creates the intimate ties between groups, which are incredibly important for successful movement. Greenfield groups are held together by weak ties

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[194] Ibid.,

[195] Ibid., 47.

[196] Gabowitsch, Mischa. *Protest in Putin's Russia*. Cambridge, UK ; Polity Press, 2017. 152.

rather than intimate ties. Social media helps facilitate "weak ties," meaning interactions between people who interact infrequently and are not part of the same social circle. Interactions between weak ties are important across social networks. However, it is also shown that if someone receives a message online from a strong tie, such as a person who they interact with in their everyday life, they are more likely to retransmit the message to the rest of the network's users.[197] These two networks, legacy and greenfield both served important roles for the movement. Legacy networks helped to connect experienced activists, and provided the intimate ties which cause individuals to follow through and show up at a protest. Greenfield networks increased the reach of the movement significantly, and helped people who may not have been previously involved learn more about activism opportunities.

The intimate ties between activists seen in legacy groups allows for moral support and encouragement between individuals, as well as a feeling of trust knowing that someone has your back when engaging in high risk protest.[198]

Greenfield networks, while largely consisting of weak ties, shows that being members of organizations helps to facilitate movement participation. An important role that organizations do play is in spreading the word about activism opportunities, even if the members do not choose to pursue them.[199] Additionally, contact with organizations leads to people being the target of

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[197] Bakshy, Eytan. Itamar Rosenn, Cameron Marlow and Lada Adamic. "The Role of Social Networks in Information Diffusion." *Proceedings of ACM WWW* (2013). 8.

[198] Goodwin, Jeff, and Steven Pfaff. "Emotion Work in High-Risk Social Movements: Managing Fear in the U.S. and East German Civil Rights Movement." In *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, edited by Jeff Goodwin, James M Jasper , and Francesca Polletta , Chicago, Illinois : University of Chicago Press , 2001. 286.

[199] Nepstad, Sharon, and Christian Smith. "Rethinking Recruitment to High-Risk/Cost Activism: The Case of Nicaragua Exchange." *Mobilization (San Diego, Calif.)* 4, no. 1 (1999): 35.

mobilization attempts. A key idea around non-conversion is that interested individuals will fail to convert if they are not the target of mobilization attempts.

Given the vast amount of participants in the greenfield networks, is it important to ask how individuals became involved, and what made them seek out activist networks on facebook. One explanation is that these individuals came across the legacy groups, which were pre existing activism groups on facebook which predated the protest cycle.[200] Greene's data shows that 20-30% of greenfield network participants also participated in a legacy network. Another key explanation is the type of media the person was engaging with. There is a high correlation with use of alternative media and participation in greenfield groups.[201] This alternative media shows the reality of the corruption in the Russian state, which the state controlled media does not. If someone has access to the full scope of the issues, this can cause a moral outrage which will trigger a desire to protest. I believe that ideological identification has a role to play in why individuals seek out alternative forms of media. If someone grew up in a household with frequent discussion of politics, and instances of political activism, I believe they are more likely to search for alternative media sites than someone who grew up in a politically apathetic household, where the state-controlled media is readily available and likely taken at face value. Additionally, use of alternative media can be explained by age, with the younger generation being more likely to seek out alternative media.

While social media was incredibly important to informing protesters, social networks for movement participation also existed off the screen. There is a history in post-Soviet Russia of

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[200] Greene, Samuel A. "Beyond Bolotnaia: Bridging Old and New in Russia's Election Protest Movement." *Problems of post-communism* 60, no. 2 (2013). 49

[201] Ibid.,

relying on close relationships to filter and discuss political information.[202] This is largely due to two reasons. First, as previously discussed, because of the Soviet past and the authoritarian nature of the state, civil society and political parties are underdeveloped, especially in comparison to what is seen in liberal democracies.[203] Secondly, there is a large gap between the information that is being disseminated in state controlled vs what is being shared in independent media. Given this large gap, individuals may not know what to believe and rely on close relations to come to an understanding of what is reality.[204]

Regina Smyth and Sarah Oates conducted a poll of protest participants to learn how they heard about different protest opportunities. 64.7% of the participants reported that they had heard about the protest from the internet, such as facebook or another non-state controlled site.[205] 22.3% heard about the protests through their personal networks.[206] This data shows that independent media is the leading spreader of news for protests, but personal networks have a role to play.

I believe that the use of social media and these personal networks have the ability to work in conjunction with each other to create mobilization. One member of a family may be active on social media and see information about a rally being held in their city. They might discuss this with family members, or a news story shared by the opposition. Through talking this through

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[202] Smyth, Regina, and Sarah Oates. "Mind the Gaps: Media Use and Mass Action in Russia." *Europe-Asia studies* 67, no. 2 (2015). 293.
[203] Ibid.,
[204] Ibid.,
[205] Ibid., 294.
[206] Ibid.,

with family members and close friends, and sharing grievances, an individual will be more likely to go than if they just saw the story on social media.

I theorize that the existence of social networks helped individuals who had existing grievances to go through with protesting. Evidence from interviews with protesters in the 2011-2012 protests shows that protesters knowing that they are part of a larger network caused them to show up. In the 2012 protests, during the March of Millions, at Bolotnaya Square participants on the street were interviewed. When asked why they decided to attend the protest, a common answer was they decided to go when they heard others were also attending. One man explained his decision to go, "As soon as I saw that I was not the only one, - I was disappointed in our people - when I realized that I was not alone, that there are many of us..." His wife echoed his sentiment, saying, "Yes, yes. We feel that these people - we are in solidarity with them, we have something in common. Where do we meet? We don't meet anywhere. And these rallies somehow united us. And we saw that there are basically a lot of us, it turns out, such"(Woman, 35-40 years old, works in education).[207] Many activists may have wanted a space to share their grievances, but felt uncomfortable with protesting alone. Only when they knew they would be part of a mass group did they feel comfortable attending. I theorize that without the social networks, many protesters would not have attended despite their moral outrage, and that only through the strength of numbers as well as ties with other activists, did they feel comfortable protesting.

This rationale fits with the past research done on social networks and how they form accountability. In many ways, the Bolotnaya Square protests were a “mass meeting.” While the

[207] Zhuralev, Oleg, and Artemy Magun. “New Populism. Issues of Identity of the Protest Movement in Russia 2011-2012.” Republic, December 27, 2012. https://republic.ru/posts/28143.

purpose of the protest was to march and show their dissent, it also allowed for activists to interact with each other, and discuss their discontent. Goodwin and Pfaff list these mass meetings amongst their "encouragement mechanisms," and write that mass meetings help activists overcome feelings of isolation and give them a sense of security with numbers. Additionally, mass meetings generate feelings of collective power, energy and solidarity.[208] In the case of these interviewees, they seemed to show up not because of intimate social ties with other activists, but instead because they felt there would be a large mass of people. Additionally, these mass meetings help to form feelings of collective identity. The shared identity which unites these individuals seems to be their discontent with the state of the nation, and a feeling of injustice.

In one individual's interview of how they feel the protest can be successful, they explicitly pointed to the collaboration with others. "Well, there is not enough unity of the people. All these holidays, everything else is all a farce. We need a real people's idea that can unite everyone" (Male, 25 years old, historian).[209] This shows that people feel that only through collaboration, not individual discontent will the movement be successful. Following this logic, it is likely that an individual who feels frustrated will not act alone, as they believe it will be unsuccessful, and instead wait until they are united with others before acting.

In order to create a large-scale movement like the one seen in 2011-2012, there needs to be a critical mass of individuals willing to show up. It seems that in order to do this, the rhetoric of the For Free and Fair Elections protest was aimed at appealing to moral emotions and

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[208] Goodwin, Jeff, and Steven Pfaff. "Emotion Work in High-Risk Social Movements: Managing Fear in the U.S. and East German Civil Rights Movement." In *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, edited by Jeff Goodwin, James M Jasper , and Francesca Polletta , Chicago, Illinois : University of Chicago Press , 2001. 286.

[209] Zhuralev, Oleg, and Artemy Magun. "New Populism. Issues of Identity of the Protest Movement in Russia 2011-2012." Republic, December 27, 2012. https://republic.ru/posts/28143.

avoiding political aims which could cause division amongst the ranks. When a woman in St. Petersburg was asked about the demands of the movement, she responded, "I think that the demand for fair elections in itself implies certain changes that will make life better not only for the hipsters, for example, but also for retired people and so on. That is, global changes" (Female, Radio Host, 25 years old).[210] In her interview, the woman avoids making political demands, instead focusing on creating "fairness" which will be universally appealing.

Navalny Campaign and Protest:

Introduction:

This section will look at the Navalny presidential campaign in 2017-2018, and the protests which occurred following Navalny's arrest in 2021. This section will mainly use data from members of Navalny's online groups, to identify what factors cause an individual to support Navalny. This section shows that Navalny's base of support for his presidential campaign was built largely through his social media presence at the time of campaign, and there was a lack of an established social network before 2017. I argue that Navalny's support was built less between relational ties between other activists, but instead activists own identification with Navalny and his campaign, and their desire to become involved in activism for their own self fulfillment.

[210] Laboratory of Public Sociology. "Where Is the Movement Going: The Identity of Russian Protest 2011-2012." Lefteast, November 7, 2014. https://lefteast.org/where-is-the-movement-going-russian-protest-2011-2012/.

Moral Emotions and Ideological Identification:

This section will examine how different morals and ideological backgrounds influenced individuals affiliated with Navalny. Two different groups made up Navalny's campaign staff in his 2017-2018 campaign. First, there were experienced activists who had prior experience in the political or civic sphere. One campaign worker shared, "My first attempt at political activism was at the age of fifteen when I came across a resonate murder case that happened in my city that the police refused to investigate."[211] Another campaign worker interviewed shared that their past experience was in environmental activism in the city of Krasnodar Krai. "Civil Society was totally eradicated." They shared. "Environmental activism was the only activism possible."[212] This background experience led to them seeing joining Navalny's campaign as a logical next step in their path as an activist. In a poll of Navalny campaign workers, 31% had some sort of past activism experience.[213] This yearning for an activist experience shows how many people use activism as a way of finding dignity and an enlargement in their sense of self. This theory is largely articulated by William Gamson, who theorized that participation in social movements leads to an enlargement of personal identity and can lead to self realization.[214] In looking at two datasets, one which looked at Navalny campaign workers, and one which looked at ones who had shown online support for Navalny, discussion of politics was a common theme. 60% of campaign workers reported discussing politics often, in comparison to 42% of online

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[211] Dollbaum , Jan Matti, Elena Sirotkina , and Andrei Semenov. "Active Urbanites in an Authoritarian Regime ." Essay. In *Varieties of Russian Activism: State-Society Contestation in Everyday Life*, edited by Jeremy Morris , Andrei Semenov, and Regina Smyth,. Bloomington , Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2023. 263.
[212] Ibid.,
[213] Dollbaum, Jan Matti, and Andrei Semenov. 2022. "Navalny's Digital Dissidents: A New Dataset on a Russian Opposition Movement." *Problems of Post-Communism* 69 (3): doi:10.1080/10758216.2021.1893123. 284.
[214]Gamson, William, "The Social Psychology of Collective Action," in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* , ed. Aldon Morris and Carol Mueller (Yale University Press, 1992), 56.

supporters.[215] This interest in politics shows an ideological identification and may point to individuals being raised in an environment where politics played a large role and was often discussed. A key part of the Navalny campaign were the two countrywide protests which occurred on March 26th, and June 17th of 2017. In a poll of campaign workers, 40% of activists who attended stated it was their first protest attendance, in comparison to 32% of online supporters.[216]

The second group of Navalny campaign workers are in stark contrast to the first. They had no past experience in activism, and many of them were previously indifferent to politics. Their reason for joining the Navalny campaign came from mounting frustration with the current regime, with corruption being a leading complaint. One volunteer was quoted saying, "corruption is the fundamental cancerous tumor, the kind that produces a terrible metastasis."[217] Another campaign worker stated their frustration with corruption and the unfairness of the system, saying, "I see how the government rapaciously interferes in the economy, suppresses entrepreneurship, and breeds corruption. I advocate for the idea that the state should be regulated through legal procedures, through taxation. The state should care a lot about economic equality and take efforts to bridge the inequality gap."[218] Fighting against corruption has been a common thread in Navalny's platform since his early days as a politician. In a political context, corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. It can take the form of politicians misusing

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[215] Ibid.,

[216] Ibid.,

[217] Dollbaum , Jan Matti, Elena Sirotkina , and Andrei Semenov. "Active Urbanites in an Authoritarian Regime ." Essay. In *Varieties of Russian Activism: State-Society Contestation in Everyday Life*, edited by Jeremy Morris , Andrei Semenov, and Regina Smyth,. Bloomington , Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2023. 263.

[218] Ibid., 264.

public money, or corporations bribing officials in order to get good deals.[219] The idea of corruption closely aligns with the idea of someone being immoral. In corruption, the ruler entrusted by the public is abusing this trust. I believe that widespread corruption elicits moral outrage, as instead of just an individual feeling they have been wronged, the system is against the "ordinary people" and disadvantages all of them.

Some campaign members who were interviewed cited their support of Navalny for his personality and morals. One male, age 34 said in his interview, "I follow personalities: there is Navalny, who I have followed already for a long time, and I reckon that this person does not abandon or betray - a person who has ideals and pursues them."[220] This description of Navalny, someone who pursues his ideals, portrays him as a moral exemplar, someone whose morals are in line with his actions. Additionally, theory around morals suggests that someone would want to associate with individuals who they feel have the same moral code as them.[221] Navalny's ability to portray himself as morally "good" has attracted supporters to him.

Jan Matti Dollbaum conducted a poll of 910 social media supporters of Navalny's campaign, in an attempt to trace when and why they began to become interested in Alexei Navalny's campaign. The responses show the success of Navalny's social media strategy for recruiting support. 35% of respondents trace their interest in Navalny to the release of his video 'On Vam ne Dimon,' a documentary film narrated by Navalny which portrays Prime Minister

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[219] "What Is Corruption?" Transparency.org. https://www.transparency.org/en/what-is-corruption.

[220] Dollbaum, Jan Matti. "Protest Trajectories in Electoral Authoritarianism: From Russia's 'For Fair Elections' Movement to Alexei Navalny's Presidential Campaign." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 36, no. 3 (April 9, 2020). https://doi.org/10.1080/1060586x.2020.1750275. 202.

[221] Prinz, Jesse. *The Emotional Construction of Morals*, Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2008. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/bates/detail.action?docID=415866. 183.

Dmitry Medvedev's corruption and embezzlement.[222] 209 of the 910 respondents cited that they were already interested in Navalny before the 2017 campaign. Only 19% of these respondents traced their interest back to the 2011-2012 protests, where Navalny played a leading role. This is roughly 4% of respondents. This can be explained by how young Navalny's base is, 78% of respondents were below the age of 29.[223] However, this lack of retention of his supporters from the 2011-2012 protest cycle shows that the impressive social networks which were built during the 2011-2012 protest cycle had largely deteriorated by the time the 2017 campaign came around. This can be explained by the massive repression which occurred after this protest cycle, and the laws which significantly cracked down on Russian's ability to organize. Navalny's new base of support comes from his successful online presence and rhetoric which applies to many young Russians.

In looking at Navalny's political rhetoric, aside from his focus on corruption, his campaign can be referred to as "catch-all" meaning that it can garner support from individuals with a variety of political affiliations. Dollbaum and Semenov write that the campaign was intended to, "provide various disaffected sections of the population with elements to support, and then to integrate them into a more or less coherent platform."[224] In a poll of Navalny's online supporters, it was found that Navalny's most prized quality was his clear positioning against the political leadership.[225] When respondents were asked to explain why they supported Navalny,

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[222] Dollbaum, Jan Matti. "Protest Trajectories in Electoral Authoritarianism: From Russia's 'For Fair Elections' Movement to Alexei Navalny's Presidential Campaign." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 36, no. 3 (April 9, 2020). https://doi.org/10.1080/1060586x.2020.1750275. 198.
[223] Ibid., 199.
[224]Dollbaum, Jan Matti, and Andrei Semenov. 2022. "Navalny's Digital Dissidents: A New Dataset on a Russian Opposition Movement." *Problems of Post-Communism* 69 (3): doi:10.1080/10758216.2021.1893123. 286.
[225] Ibid.,

40% voiced how he was opposed to the current regime, rather than any of his own policy plans.[226] Support for Navalny, who is considered "fair" is similar to the movement around the "For Free and Fair Elections" protest. Instead of focusing on political demands, which may cause divisions, participants have focused on a clear moral narrative of the unfairness and wrongness of the current regime and fighting that. Supporting Navalny is a vehicle for expressing moral outrage at the current regime. However, similarly to the "For Free and Fair Elections Protest," the opposition may struggle due a lack of clear policy.

Biographical Availability:

In choosing whether to participate in the Navalny campaign, activists must weigh their desire to get involved with personal constraints which increases the risk of participation. In interviews with Navalny's campaign staff, it is clear that they are aware of the significant risk attached to participating in the campaign. Many worried that after the campaign ended, they would be unable to return to their jobs. However, in the cases of some activists, the circumstances regarding their employment lessened these concerns. One activist interviewed expressed less concern about their career, "I am a freelancer most of the time. They cannot force people to get me fired. Okay, they can initiate my expulsion from the university. I will appeal against that but that is it. They do not have leverage to pressure me."[227] This activist's independence lessens the constraints on them, as there is less risk of them losing their income once the campaign is over.

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[226] Ibid.,

[227] Dollbaum , Jan Matti, Elena Sirotkina , and Andrei Semenov. "Active Urbanites in an Authoritarian Regime ." Essay. In *Varieties of Russian Activism: State-Society Contestation in Everyday Life*, edited by Jeremy Morris , Andrei Semenov, and Regina Smyth,. Bloomington , Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2023. 266.

Much of Navalny's support he generates from online communities. This campaign strategy is a reflection of the harsh repression of the Russian state, where it is easier for individuals to offer online support than to gather onto the streets. Through allowing avenues for online support, the Navalny campaign is lessening the constraints on movement participation, through lessening the risks and time commitment.

There were similar trends in two datasets, one which looked at Navalny campaign workers, and one which looked at ones who had shown online support for Navalny. In both sets, people were young, with a median age of 21 and 23 respectively.[228] Due to their young age, many participants may still be in school, and have less time constraints than if they were employed full time. In both datasets, over two-thirds of the participants were male, showing a stark trend in gender. Another trend recognized in the dataset is a higher level of education than the average Russian. In both datasets, two-thirds of participants have at least an incomplete level of higher education. This 67% is significantly higher than Levada Center Polls of online urbanites where this level of education or higher was at 49%.[229]

Social Networks:

A common thread which distinguished those who participated in Navalny's campaign, versus those who contributed online support only was a history of past activism. 31% of campaign members cited past activist experience, while only 15% of online participants.[230] This contrast becomes even starker when looking at political activism specifically. Roughly 20% of

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[228] Dollbaum, Jan Matti, and Andrei Semenov. 2022. "Navalny's Digital Dissidents: A New Dataset on a Russian Opposition Movement." *Problems of Post-Communism* 69 (3): doi:10.1080/10758216.2021.1893123. 284.
[229] Ibid.,
[230] Ibid.,

campaign workers had past political activism, compared to only 8% of online participants.[231] This past political activism includes liberal or democratic projects such as Yabloko, or past campaign experience. Other types of past activism include social and ecological projects in cities.

Despite this history of past activism amongst campaign members, there is a lack of evidence that these past activism experiences created relational ties which led to participation in Navalny's campaign. Relational ties existed between activists in the 2011-2012 protests, as many activists had belonged to small organizations together which predated the protest movement, allowing for the growth of intimate ties. This is not to say there were no opportunities for relational ties between activists who support Navalny. One example of this is when a Navalny campaign member talked about becoming involved with the campaign, saying, "when Navalny announced he would run for president, my friends advised me to join the campaign."[232] However, as seen in Jan Matti Dollbaum's poll of how activists came to support Navalny, the vast majority cited Navalny's online activity, rather than learning about him from a friend or family member. In a poll of campaign participants and online supporters, 68% and 58% respectively, reported that their support for Navalny caused conflict with friends, family, classmates and colleagues.[233]

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[231] Ibid., 285.

[232] Dollbaum , Jan Matti, Elena Sirotkina , and Andrei Semenov. "Active Urbanites in an Authoritarian Regime ." Essay. In *Varieties of Russian Activism: State-Society Contestation in Everyday Life*, edited by Jeremy Morris , Andrei Semenov, and Regina Smyth,. Bloomington , Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2023. 263.

[233] Dollbaum, Jan Matti, and Andrei Semenov. 2022. "Navalny's Digital Dissidents: A New Dataset on a Russian Opposition Movement." *Problems of Post-Communism* 69 (3): doi:10.1080/10758216.2021.1893123. 285.

However, while the Navalny network largely lacked relational ties, the organizational ties helped activists show up in mass for the "Free Navalny" protests in 2021. In these protests in 2021, social media was a key tool for activists. Twitter was largely used as a space for leading anti-regime voices to share their opinions. The leading voices on twitter were key politicians in the Navalny movement such as Lyubov Sobol, Mariya Pevchikh, Kira Yarmysh and more. While Navalny was in jail for the movement, his account was still active, through being run by his team.[234] While facebook still plays a large role, it was not the leading platform like it was in 2011-2012. This is largely due to Facebook failing to attract a new generation of activists.[235]

The protests which erupted following Navalny's arrest in 2021 were made possible through the existing network Navalny and his organization had created. This organization included 45 regional branches with 180 full time employees and a large number of volunteers.[236] Information could be rapidly shared through telegram channels and mailing lists. Those who had an interest in Navalny and were sympathetic towards the opposition could easily know where to go to protest alongside other like minded individuals. This fits the theory around how organizational ties facilitate movement participation, through spreading the word about activism opportunities.[237]

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[234] Glazunova, Sofya, and Malmi Amadoru. "'Anti-Regime Influentials' Across Platforms: A Case Study of the Free Navalny Protests in Russia." *Media and Communication* 11, no. 3 (2023): https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A779352519/AONE?u=bates_main&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=bba9a65a.
[235] Ibid.,
[236] Bidin, Alexander. "This Is What It's like inside Russia's Anti-War Movement." openDemocracy, February 28, 2022. https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/ukraine-russia-anti-war-protest-movement-small-defiant/.
[237] Nepstad, Sharon, and Christian Smith. "Rethinking Recruitment to High-Risk/Cost Activism: The Case of Nicaragua Exchange." *Mobilization (San Diego, Calif.)* 4, no. 1 (1999): 35.

The Ukraine War Protests:

Introduction:

This final section will focus on the protest which has come since the Russian full scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. I will first examine how the climate of distrust in Russia has caused barriers for relations between activists, and how state repression has led to the wide scale breakdown of social networks. Given these issues, moral emotions and ideological identification is the most potent argument for why activists persist with high risk activism. Looking at interviews with Russian activists, I will look to identify how their reasoning fits into the theory of moral emotions. I will then present a counter argument, that protest can be based on more empathic anger than moral anger, and that in some cases, social networks persist.

Climate of Distrust and Meeting Other Activists:

The presence of social networks and the existence of organizational and relational ties has become more difficult due to the increased risk associated with supporting the war. Social networks connected to dissent cannot be formed when people are unwilling to openly discuss politics. Anna Kuleshova, a Russian sociologist has talked to anti-war activists about how they communicate with other activists. One woman expressed her fear about openly discussing her views on the war with a shopkeeper. “If you keep silent, you [anti-war citizens] will become even less," the woman said, "but you don't know what it will cost, and you can't trust."

It is not only with strangers that Russians are unwilling to share their opinions. Amongst family members, opinions are kept to themselves. Kuleshova spoke to one woman who has not discussed with her husband whether or not he supports the war. Russian citizens are afraid that

by probing they will learn that their loved ones have "mutated" or "gone to the side of evil."[238] This distrust heavily impacts the ability for collective mobilization, which often arises out of everyday interactions.[239] The most productive of these interactions are ones which emphasize shared identities and grievances. However, if people are unwilling to share their political identities and grievances, it is unlikely that mobilization will occur.

This climate of distrust is due to circumstances where Russian citizens will report each other to the authorities. When Russian citizens are turned in by people they know, who they sit next to in class, the climate of mistrust intensifies and it becomes increasingly difficult to share sentiments and connect with other anti-war protesters. Denouncements which were popular in Soviet era Russia and have made a comeback as the government attempts to eradicate dissent for the war. In March of 2022, Putin called upon Russia to purge itself by spitting out traitors "like gnats."[240] In an example of the extreme, Anna Korobkova claims to have written 1,397 denunciations since the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "All those who oppose the special military operation are rivals of my own wellbeing." She reports.[241]

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[238] Panin, Ilya, ed. "'They Are Trying to Guess by the Face What Views the Interlocutor Is': How Dissenting Russians Live and Find Each Other." Cherta Media , June 29, 2023. https://cherta.media/story/kak-zhivut-nesoglasnye-rossiyane/?ysclid=lj5cvhbjws417404411.

[239] Morris , Jeremy, Andrei Semenov , and Regina Smyth. "Everyday Activism: Tracking the Evolution of Russian State and Society Relations ." In *Varieties of Russian Activism: State-Society Contestation in Everyday Life* , edited by Regina Smyth, Andrei Semenov , and Jeremy Morris , 1–29. Bloomington, Indiana : Indiana University Press , 2023. 11.

[240] Dixon , Robyn. "Russians Snitch on Russians Who Oppose War with Soviet-Style Denunciation" The Washington Post . https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/05/27/russia-denunciations-arrests-informants-war/.

[241] Zatari, Amalia. "Ukraine War: The Russians Snitching on Colleagues and Strangers." BBC News, November 19, 2023. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-67427422.

Deteriorating Social Networks and Ties:

Given this climate of distrust, it is harder for dissenters to find each other. Symbols are often used for dissenters to recognize each other in public. During the 2011-2012 protests, the main symbol was for protesters to wear a white ribbon. Since the invasion, symbols showing support for the war have come under scrutiny. A nurse at a children's hospice was arrested after someone took a photograph of a badge on her backpack depicting the colors of Ukraine's flag. Another man was arrested after someone spotted his phone lock screen, a symbol of the Ukrainian military unit Azov.[242] In the context of the Ukraine war, activists have searched for new, safe symbols. These can include people wearing the colors of the Ukrainian flag as their clothing, or wearing a green ribbon tied to their wrist.[243] Women activists have placed stickers on their cars with the inscription "Bring Back my Husband" and "I'm Fed up." These women have also taken to wearing white head scarves. Anna Kuleshova reports that activists try to identify other like minded individuals through their clothing style, or face, but this is unreliable.

Another way that activists attempt to connect and meet each other is through going to what are "safe spaces." These safe spaces are often cultural events, where they know that the artist or organizer has similar political views. Anna Kuleshova writes about this tactic, saying, "At the concert of Polina Osetinskaya. They go not only because she is a wonderful pianist - she, according to respondents, is against the war, which means that it will most likely be possible to find "your own" there. According to the same principle, the dissenting of the rest attend

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[242] Dixon , Robyn. "Russians Snitch on Russians Who Oppose War with Soviet-Style Denunciation" The Washington Post . https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/05/27/russia-denunciations-arrests-informants-war/.
[243] Panin, Ilya, ed. "'They Are Trying to Guess by the Face What Views the Interlocutor Is': How Dissenting Russians Live and Find Each Other." Cherta Media , June 29, 2023. https://cherta.media/story/kak-zhivut-nesoglasnye-rossiyane/?ysclid=lj5cvhbjws417404411.

underground exhibitions of modern and anti-war art."[244] The use of symbols and safe spaces shows the importance to activists of finding like minded people. Finding other activists and shared spaces connects to the idea of encouragement mechanisms from Jeff Goodwin and Steven Pfaff. Encouragement mechanisms come from the idea that being in a social network of other activists helps to mitigate fear. This is through group meetings and other interactions causing feelings of security and solidarity.[245] As repression increases in Russia and it becomes harder and harder to connect to other activists, feelings of solidarity and security decrease, and instead fear and isolation sets in. In addition to the challenges of finding other activists, the community has been harmed by the flight of many activists since the start of the war. One activist laments this mass exodus, saying, "A lot of people have left and there is a feeling of emptiness and holes that cannot be compensated for (...) the bright and good have left, but the irrational, idiotic, wrong feeling - they left us here. It is clear that they were saved, and it feels like a deaf longing."[246] Not only does this flight of activists shrink the community in Russia, it also likely leads to negative thought processes for those who remain. They may see prominent activists exit and begin to doubt the potential efficacy of their movement, or if what they are doing is worth the risk, if others, who they once worked alongside, have decided the risk is too great. Non conversion is more likely to take place when there is a lack of belief in the efficacy of the movement.

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[244] Panin, Ilya, ed. "'They Are Trying to Guess by the Face What Views the Interlocutor Is': How Dissenting Russians Live and Find Each Other." Cherta Media , June 29, 2023. https://cherta.media/story/kak-zhivut-nesoglasnye-rossiyane/?ysclid=lj5cvhbjws417404411.

[245] Goodwin, Jeff, and Steven Pfaff. "Emotion Work in High-Risk Social Movements: Managing Fear in the U.S. and East German Civil Rights Movement." In *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, edited by Jeff Goodwin, James M Jasper , and Francesca Polletta , Chicago, Illinois : University of Chicago Press , 2001. 286.

[246] Kuleshova , Anna. "'Now Everyone Understands What Is Necessary and What Is Not Necessary to Discuss on the Phone.' How the Daily Life of Dissenting Russians Has Changed after February 24." Republic, April 18, 2023. https://republic.ru/posts/108009.

Another obstacle to social networks in Russia's crackdown on social media. In 2022, Facebook was banned by a Moscow court, while Twitter has been restricted by a Russian censorship body.[247] Activists are having to be more flexible with their use of social media, given the shrinking availability of platforms. Russian social media sites such as Vkontakte and Telegram have taken a leading role. However, these Russian sites create their own problems, as there is increased surveillance and censorship present on these sites, then on international sites.[248]

Organizational and Relational Ties to Social Networks:

This section will focus on the remaining social networks in Russia following the crackdown by the regime.

As stated previously, the impressive turnout for the protest following Alexei Navalny's arrest was possible due to the existing online network which Navalny and his team had created. However, by the time of the invasion of Ukraine, this online network had largely been destroyed by the Russian State. In June of 2021, the Navalny network was declared an extremist organization.[249] The social media accounts of the network, largely telegram and mailing lists, which had been used to spread information about protests had been shut down.

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[247] Glazunova, Sofya, and Malmi Amadoru. "'Anti-Regime Influentials' Across Platforms: A Case Study of the Free Navalny Protests in Russia." *Media and Communication* 11, no. 3 (2023): https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A779352519/AONE?u=bates_main&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=bba9a65a.
[248] Ibid
[249] Bidin, Alexander. "This Is What It's like inside Russia's Anti-War Movement." openDemocracy, February 28, 2022. https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/ukraine-russia-anti-war-protest-movement-small-defiant/.

Due to the largest existing network for the opposition being shut down, there was a lack of news spread about where and when the protests would be occurring. Marina Litvinovich, a human rights activist posted an appeal on her social networks for people to gather in city centers. Litvinovich's call was disseminated by some independent media outlets. However, her reach was small compared to Navalny's. In February of 2022 she had 7,500 instagram followers in comparison to Navalny's 3.5 million.[250] This shows a significant lack of reach from the remaining social networks. When there is low density in social networks, there are less opportunities for wide scale mobilization. A key factor in non conversion is when an interested individual is not a target of mobilization attempts, so they fail to convert.

Because of this lack of readily available information, and the limited reach of the opposition movement, Russian citizens had to have an already large amount of motivation to protest. Unlike with the Navalny protests where information would appear in their inbox, they would have to seek out information. A medical student named Nikita shared how she came to protest. "I was in the city center, following the news. And when TE [Typical Yekaterinburg – a social media channel in the city] began to cover the events, I went there. There was no information in advance, unlike when the Navalny teams functioned. There was no coordination between people, there was no agitation either. These were people who came there themselves, after reports that two people had already been detained for picketing."[251] Because of this lack of coordination, activists lacked the encouragement mechanisms that come from being a part of a social network. Encouragement mechanisms help to mitigate fear. These include the existence of

[250] Ibid.,
[251] Ibid.,

intimate ties in social networks, and attendance of mass meetings.[252] Instead, protesters went not knowing how many others would be there, and without the comfort that they would be part of a large group. This is in contrast to the 2011-2012 protests as well as the Navalny protests. Due to individuals acting without the support of a social network, I theorize that moral emotions play a larger role in these individuals' decision to protest.

Denunciations are usually a result of an individual act, such as a post on social media. Due to this, it is harder to trace the impact of social networks, then in the case of a large, organized protest. However, I believe that we can see the deterioration of social networks in the weak ties that denounced individuals have to other activists.

Olesya Krivtsova, who was arrested after her social media posts were reported by her fellow students, has a lack of in person ties, and instead relies on social media for this support. Krivtsova describes her fellow students as largely apolitical, with a few exceptions. When asked about the position of her teachers, she said, “they never said it at all. But that's not surprising. If the teacher has students who can go and write a denunciation, I wouldn’t speak either.”[253] She describes the atmosphere in her city, saying, “I think that in Arkhangelsk in general there are still more war-minded people, unfortunately. We have all the buses with the letters Z, everywhere there are posters with images of "heroes", in general, propaganda works very seriously. Nearby is Severodvinsk, in general, a military city, there are [enterprises] of the military-industrial

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[252] Goodwin, Jeff, and Steven Pfaff. “Emotion Work in High-Risk Social Movements: Managing Fear in the U.S. and East German Civil Rights Movement.” In *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, edited by Jeff Goodwin, James M Jasper , and Francesca Polletta , Chicago, Illinois : University of Chicago Press , 2001. 286.

[253] Kurbangaleeva, Farida. “She Left the House with a Bracelet and Flew to Lithuania. Interview with Anti-War Activist Olesya Krivtsova, Who Wanted to Be Imprisoned for Seven Years for Stories.” Edited by Dmitry Sidorov. Cherta Media , March 20, 2023. https://cherta.media/interview/olesya-krivcova/.

complex. In general, 90 percent support the war and Putin. It makes me sad."[254] Due to the atmosphere that Krivtsova resides in, she is unable to form ties through everyday interactions and shared grievances. Much of the theory around non-conversion states that when an individual did not know anyone else participating, they were not likely to convert. Despite Krivtsova's lack of strong ties, she still participated. In this pro-war atmosphere, she has found out much of her information about the war, not from in-person networks, but off social media. For example, she originally got in trouble for reposting other activists' posts on Vkontakte and Instagram.

Krivtsova is not the only one who has had to turn to the internet to find support and like minded individuals. Tatiana Savinka is a 77 year old woman, who has two criminal cases opened against her for discrediting the army. She has distributed leaflets with messages such as "Putin, leave Ukraine" and "Ukraine will be free."[255] Savinka states that she does not feel support, or feel that people have the same views as her in person. They attempt to dissuade her from her activism, and she hears people in public justifying the war. On the internet, however, she interacts with people on VKontakte, a Russian social media site who hold similar views to her. On VKontakte people have raised money for her to pay legal fees for her cases. However, these are relatively weak ties, and unlikely to lend any of the benefits discussed in the theory around social networks.

The theory around non-conversion shows that these individuals who are for the most part alone in their activism, should be at high risk of non conversion. However, despite this they took part in high risk activism. The next section will look more closely at moral emotions and

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[254] Ibid.,

[255] "'Aren't You Ashamed?': An Interview with 77-Year-Old Tatiana Savinkina, Who Was Prosecuted for 'Discrediting the Army.'" Cherta Media, November 8, 2022. https://cherta.media/interview/savikina-interview/.

ideological identification, which I feel offers an explanation for why this high risk activism still occurred.

Biographical Availability:

Given the increased repression of the Russian state, the stakes for becoming involved in protest are higher than ever. It is unlikely that there will be an individual who will not pay a significant price for participating in protest. Because of this, I theorize that biographical availability is likely shrinking in importance.

Some things that might encourage individuals to participate in protest is if they are not working and economically responsible for others. This is seen in the case of Irina Epinafnovskaya and Tatiana Savinka who are both retired. Epinafnovskaya states that while her children share her anti-war position, they are unable to join her in protesting. "They share my attitude and suffer a lot from the fact that they can't take part in any actions." She shares. "I see it in the circle of their acquaintances. They are people from 30 to 40 years old, they are afraid for their lives, they are afraid, they arrange their lives. They raise a child."[256] Epinafnovskaya then contrasts her childrens position to where she is in life. "I have already lived most of my life, I have solved all my main tasks, I have raised children, I had a profession." It is clear that Epinafnovskaya feels she has less constraints that keep her from protesting in comparison to her children, who have constraints such as young children and careers. Her children fit the model of people who are motivated to protest, but due to constraints become victims of non-conversion.

[256] Chizhova, Lyubov. "'The War against the Closest People Is My Personal Grief.'" Svoboda , September 3, 2014. https://www.svoboda.org/a/26562877.html.

Ideological Identification:

This section will look at how ideological identification is observed amongst protesters. One trend amongst people who have been denounced is a prior political involvement before the war. Andrey Anarin, a resident of Moscow who works as a taxi driver, was charged after he created a telegram channel where he published anti-war posts. According to Adarin's family, he had been involved in different social activities since he was a child. He participated in youth organizations and created a discussion club where he and other members discussed different issues in the region.[257] Evgeny Bestuzhev was arrested for his posts on Vkontakte, a Russian social media site. In the early 90s, after the fall of the Soviet Union, Bestuzhev participated in the Democratic Russia movement. He later worked at the State Duma and the St. Petersburg "strategy" movement. Tatiana Savinkina is a 77 year old woman from Petrozavodsk, who has two cases opened against her for discrediting the army. Previously, Savinkina worked at the ministry of internal affairs, where she was engaged in political and educational work, and worked in the department of rehabilitation of political prisoners.[258] Theory around ideological identification posits that the environment which someone was raised in has an impact on whether they choose to become involved politically. A possible explanation for these individuals' history of activism is that they were raised in an environment where politics were frequently discussed, and their family members were involved in politics. However, this can not be determined in this project.

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[257] "'I Understood That They Would Be Arrested, There Was Only One Question - When':About Political Prisoners in 2022 - Their Relatives and Lawyers." Cherta Media , April 17, 2023. https://cherta.media/story/politzeki/.
[258] "'Aren't You Ashamed?': An Interview with 77-Year-Old Tatiana Savinkina, Who Was Prosecuted for 'Discrediting the Army.'" Cherta Media, November 8, 2022. https://cherta.media/interview/savikina-interview/.

Another reason many people have chosen to protest is due to a personal connection to Ukraine. When discussing her reasons for getting involved, Olesya Krivtsova said, “Plus, a very good mother's friend lives in Ukraine. During the peak of the fighting, she went to Poland, then to Germany, then returned home. I called her, and she told her that she doesn't have electricity all the time, even to this day.”[259] Tatiana Savinka was born in Ukraine, and has many family members, as well as her ex-husband who currently live there. A connection to Ukraine can lead to ideological identification with the movement. Some theorists believe that ideological identification is a result of someone’s membership group being in a disadvantageous position compared to other groups.[260] If individuals identify as Ukrainian, through having family ties to the country, this could lead to more of an ideological identification with the movement.

Moral Emotions Amongst Protesters:

I believe that given the high risk environment of the protests, as well as the deterioration of social networks, moral emotions are the leading reason activists have chosen to protest against the war. I argue that these individuals engage in high risk protest in order to counteract negative moral emotions such as shame, fear, and outrage with feelings of pride and dignity. These emotions of pride and dignity allow for self realization. I believe that for these individuals, they fit the model of moral exemplars, where it is highly important for their identity and their sense of self that their actions be in line with their morals, which is why they are able to have such intense rewards from protesting. Because the risk of protesting is so high, these individuals must rank

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[259] Kurbangaleeva, Farida. “She Left the House with a Bracelet and Flew to Lithuania. Interview with Anti-War Activist Olesya Krivtsova, Who Wanted to Be Imprisoned for Seven Years for Stories.” Edited by Dmitry Sidorov. Cherta Media , March 20, 2023. https://cherta.media/interview/olesya-krivcova/.

[260] McAdam, D. “Recruitment to high-risk activism: The case of freedom summer.” *American Journal of Sociology 92(1)*, (1986). 65.

the reward of feelings of pride and dignity and the realization of self as more important to them than the potential costs of participation. The following section will look at interviews with protesters, where they explain why they chose to protest.

University student Olesya Krivtsova, attended Northern Federal University in Arkhangelsk used her instagram account to post stories about the war in Ukraine, which were deemed “anti-war.” Her fellow university students saw the posts. "A friend showed me a post about me in a chat," Olesya says, "about how I was against the 'special military operation'. Most of the people in this chat were history students. They were discussing whether to denounce me to the authorities." One of her classmates commented that Olesya was writing “provocative posts of a defeatist and extremist character. This is out of place for war-time. It must be nipped in the bud.” Another student wrote, “denunciation is the duty of a patriot.” Olesya was arrested in Russia, and eventually fled to Lithuania to avoid being sent to a penal colony. She left behind her family and husband.

“When the war began, I probably felt fear, horror, and misunderstanding of what would happen next.”[261] She explains a turning point in her thought process was when she witnessed pro-war celebrations in many Russian cities, which she thought sent the message that everybody supported the war. “I wanted to make a performance,” she said, “to show people that, as they themselves say, “not everything is so unambiguous.”[262] After witnessing these pro-war celebrations, she printed pamphlets to distribute. Through choosing to go against the norm that

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[261] Kurbangaleeva, Farida. “She Left the House with a Bracelet and Flew to Lithuania. Interview with Anti-War Activist Olesya Krivtsova, Who Wanted to Be Imprisoned for Seven Years for Stories.” Edited by Dmitry Sidorov. Cherta Media , March 20, 2023. https://cherta.media/interview/olesya-krivcova/.
[262] Ibid.,

these pro-war celebrations cause, Krivtsova was able to retrieve many of the in process benefits of protesting, as described by Elizabeth Wood, such as dignity and pride[263], and counteract the negative emotions she originally experienced. Krivtsova's decision to protest was also to set herself apart from the celebrations which she saw as morally wrong. Her decision is also connected to another facet of pride. As Jasper theorizes, individuals feel added pride when they are able to compare themselves to others who may not have acted as righteous.[264] Through acting in a way that she felt was morally right, she not only felt pride, but avoided feelings of shame. Shame occurs when people feel that they have failed to follow their moral code. In an interview, Krivtsova was asked if she has always been interested in politics. "Yes," She answered. "But also in the sense of writing a post on the internet, going to a rally." This shows the connection she feels between dedication to a cause and action. This will be a prevalent theme throughout these case studies, that in order for these individuals to experience pride, dignity and self realization, their actions must align with their morals. Krivtsova's occupation as a college student, as well as her young age, also connects to her willingness to protest. Younger individuals join social movements at high rates in order to create an enlargement of personal identity, and a realization of self.[265]

Similarly to Krivtsova, other Russians have engaged in acts of protests in order to avoid feelings of shame. A man by the name of Yevgeny has protested against the war through placing

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[263] Wood , Elizabeth. "Peasant Political Mobilization in El Salvador: The Contribution of Emotional In-Process Benefits." In *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, edited by Francesa Polletta, James M. Jasper , and Jeff Goodwin. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press , 2001. 272.
[264] Jasper, James M. *The Emotions of Protest*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. https://doi.org/10.7208/9780226561813., 129
[265] William Gamson, "The Social Psychology of Collective Action," in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* , ed. Aldon Morris and Carol Mueller (Yale University Press, 1992), 56.

small figurines holding protest signs across the city.[266] On the day that Russia invaded Ukraine, Yevgeny attended an anti-war rally in St. Petersburg. At the rally, he witnessed other protesters being beaten and arrested by police. The shock of this caused him to shift his protest tactics. He has placed his miniature figurines around the city and posted photos of them on social media. His movement caught on, with hundreds of other Russians creating figurines and placing them in different spots outside. Yevgeny explains his reasoning for protest, saying "Afterwards I felt like I did something, like I wasn't completely useless."[267] For many activists, their decision to protest seems less about believing their actions will result in change, but instead as an outlet for their morals and their actions to align. Through his actions, Yevgeny was able to counteract his feelings of uselessness with the in process benefits of protesting.

In the street protests which erupted right after the invasion, it is likely that protesters appeared due to a mix of moral and reflex emotions. "I have no words, it's just disgusting." A woman replied at a rally in St. Petersburg when asked about the invasion.[268] Disgust is an example of a reflex emotion and is closely related to anger. As James Jasper writes, reflex emotions cause individuals to act impulsively[269], and I theorize that this could lead to more high risk protests, such as attending a public protest. The woman continues on to say, "We feel powerlessness, anguish." [270] This idea was repeated by another protester, who shared, "At least

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[266] James, Yulia. "Ukraine War: Russians Stage Plasticine Protests to Oppose War." BBC News, July 27, 2023. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-66273597.
[267] Ibid.,
[268] Vorobyov, Niko. "'Russia Is against War': Thousands Rally in Rare Show of Dissent." Al Jazeera, February 24, 2022. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/24/russia-is-against-war-thousands-rally-in-rare-show-of-dissent.
[269] Jasper, James M. *The Emotions of Protest*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. https://doi.org/10.7208/9780226561813., 128.
[270] Jasper, James M. *The Emotions of Protest*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. https://doi.org/10.7208/9780226561813., 129

I'm not ashamed to be here, I was so ashamed this morning."[271] These protesters, similarly to the other case studies, want to counteract their negative emotions through in process benefits. Shame occurs when a person feels that they have failed to follow their moral rules. This could be especially prevalent for people who are moral exemplars, and their sense of self is highly tied into their feelings that what they feel morally is tied into their actions.[272] Due to this logic, it makes sense that protesting against something they see as morally wrong helps to alleviate feelings of shame.

For other protesters, they directly explained that through protesting, they are able to achieve self realization. This quest for morals and actions aligning is seen in the case of Olga Zazarenko. Olga Zazarenko is a school teacher who was suspended from work at the Ivanovo Medical Academy for her anti-war protests. She was arrested for three anti-war pickets. On her posters, she quoted Vitaly Gubarev's novel "The Kingdom of Crooked Mirrors": "All people, except the very bad, want to live in peace - war brings grief and ruin,"[273] In September of 2022, a criminal case was opened against her for repeated discreditation of the Russian army. Her home and workplace were both searched. If she is found guilty, she will lose her job. Zazarenko lives with her husband and two children. She states that her husband has differing political views, and since the prosecution has tried to stay away. In the case of Zazarenko, the cost of her

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[271] Vorobyov, Niko. "'Russia Is against War': Thousands Rally in Rare Show of Dissent." Al Jazeera, February 24, 2022. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/24/russia-is-against-war-thousands-rally-in-rare-show-of-dissent.
[272] Monroe, Kristen R. *The Hand of Compassion : Portraits of Moral Choice during the Holocaust*. Course Book. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004. 246.
[273] "'All People, except the Very Bad Ones, Want to Live in Peace': The Story of Teacher Olga Nazarenko, Who Opposed the War." OVD-Info. https://ovd.info/2023/10/07/nazarenko.

activism is very high. It has led to her potentially losing her livelihood and the deterioration of her personal relationships.

When asked why she engaged in anti-war pickets, she explained, “If you consider it necessary to do or say something, but you do not do or speak out of fear, it greatly drops self-esteem. Following fear prevents me from feeling like a full-fledged person."[274] Zazarenko’s feelings about actions aligning with morals helping with self esteem is in line with moral theory and moral exemplars. William Gamson writes that, “participation in social movements frequently involves enlargement of personal identity for participation and offers fulfillment and realization of the self.”[275] Through feelings of fulfillment and realization, low self esteem can be avoided. In addition, when discussing moral exemplars, Kristen Monroe writes that when a moral exemplar “feels something is morally wrong, but fails to act, they will feel they have betrayed themselves and their sense of self.” This betrayal connects to the idea of low self esteem from failing to act, which Zazarenko mentions. Only through protesting and her moral code and actions aligning, can Zazarenko feel like a “fully fledged person.”

Lyudmila Razumova was arrested along with her husband in March of 2022 for spreading “fakes” about the Russian army as well as charges of vandalism. After the invasion the couple had left inscriptions in several villages. These inscriptions contained messages such as “Ukraine, forgive us,” “Peace to Ukraine,” and “Putin is War.” Additionally, Razumova published a video

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[274]“‘All People, except the Very Bad Ones, Want to Live in Peace’: The Story of Teacher Olga Nazarenko, Who Opposed the War.” OVD-Info. https://ovd.info/2023/10/07/nazarenko.
[275]Gamson, William, “The Social Psychology of Collective Action,” in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* , ed. Aldon Morris and Carol Mueller (Yale University Press, 1992), 56.

about the death of Ukrainian citizens on her social media.[276] In January of 2023, the prosecutor in the couples case requested 7.5 years in prison for each spouse.

When asked to explain her actions, Razumova shared, "I was simply afraid of war, of how it might end for all of us. I was brought up in such a way that war is the worst thing that man has invented."[277] Once again, Razumova cites a negative moral emotion as what incited her to protest. It is likely that through this protest she hoped to counteract her fears. Jesse Prinz argues that morals are inherited by the people an individual is closest to. Moral education is given through being emotionally conditioned by the people surrounding an individual. These people are often caregivers, role models and peers. Through watching the actions of the people we respect, and their moral judgments, we form our own moral code which often closely mirrors theirs. In Razumova's case, her moral code has been constructed from a young age and taught by those who raised her. She seems to have inherited the belief that war is the worst moral wrong.

Women and "The Way Home" Movement:

This section will provide an alternative argument, which shows that protests about the Ukraine war can be driven by personal and empathic anger rather than moral emotions. In illustrating this example, I will look at "The Way Home" Movement, which is a movement against the war in Ukraine led by women who have spouses or sons fighting in Ukraine. Their anger is not based on feeling the situation is morally wrong, but instead due to the impact it has had on them and their loved ones. Additionally, the Way Home movement refutes the idea that

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[276] "The Defendant in the 'Anti-War Case' Convicted for 7 Years Told about the Pressure in the Colony." Ovd-Info, October 27, 2023. https://ovd.info/express-news/2023/10/27/osuzhdennaya-na-7-let-figurantka-antivoennogo-dela-rasskazala-o-davlenii-v?utm_source=tg_live&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=news&utm_term=27_10_23.
[277] Ibid.,

organizational and relational ties to social networks have all but deteriorated, as these women activists are still well connected online.

The following sections will first give a brief background about the group. I will then give my argument on why this movement is driven by personal and empathic anger rather than moral anger. I will then argue that "The Way Home Movement" shows that there are still possibilities for social networks to exist.

Background of the Movement:

The Way Home Movement is a telegram channel which has united relatives of male Russian soldiers fighting in Ukraine. The channel has nearly 40,000 subscribers, and the vast majority of them are women, wives and mothers of soldiers. The original manifesto of the group stated, "We are not interested in rocking the boat and destabilizing the political situation." Overtime, through discussion with each other as well as disillusionment with the inaction of the government, many turned to public protests to get their grievances heard.

In a recent letter from the group, they stated, "we are being betrayed and destroyed by our own," showing the shifting sentiments in the group. In January of 2024, the group organized several small gatherings. A message posted on telegram on January 19th, 2024 read;

> "We don't intend to stop, We, the relatives of the mobilized and those who are not indifferent to our misfortune, will go and place flowers on eternal flames. These flowers do not just symbolize our problem. We would like to be joined by widows, no matter how hard that is for them. Together we are prepared to honor the memory of your slain

relatives and to share your loss. No one should remain alone with their misfortune and our grief should not remain a secret."[278]

Personal and Empathic Anger:

The women involved in the movement have been directly impacted by the war in Ukraine, through the deployment and at times death of their loved ones. I have previously theorized that empathic anger is less likely to lead to a wide scale movement than moral anger. This is due to the fact that empathic anger originates from something happening to the loved one of an individual, rather than just injustice in a system in general. Because of this, it could apply to less people. Additionally, the demands which arise from empathic anger is justice for the individual, rather than sweeping reform. However, in these case studies, the demands that arise from empathic anger are more varied.

Maria Ishkova, a Russian woman, recorded a video message in January of 2024, after learning that her husband had been killed in action. In her video message, she talks about picking up her husband's remains in the Ukrainian city of Berdiansk. In her video message, she says "I want to tell you that the people here have no need of [the war], no one has any need for it. The people we love are simply getting killed for nothing. They're of no worth to anyone."[279] The anger that Ishkova feels can be classified as empathetic anger. She feels anger and outrage over a

[278] North.Realities, RFE/RL's. "'A Group without Leaders': Disgruntled Families of Mobilized Russians Complicate Putin's Plan for Smooth Reelection." RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, January 23, 2024. https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-families-mobilized-soldiers-complicate-putin-reelection/32788726.html.
[279] Hecksinductionhour. "The Way Home: Wives of the Mobilized." The Russian Reader, January 8, 2024. https://therussianreader.com/2024/01/07/2527/.

loved one being hurt, which has led to her wanting to get justice for him. This is different from moral anger, which is triggered by a perceived unfairness in a system. This empathetic anger has caused Ishkova to become involved in political activism. In the video she states that she has tried to understand how the world order could let such things happen.

> "I think that we ourselves are probably to blame for everything. I think that we let it happen by taking the minimal civic stance that we did - when each of us says, 'I don't get involved in politics, it doesn't interest me, it doesn't worry me.' Each of us lived in this little world - where nothing mattered, where politics was decided by itself, where things happened of their own accord. [...] We were indifferent to these things, and now these things have devoured us."[280]

While Ishkova was not motivated by moral anger, her anger still results in activism. She encourages everyone to become politically active, which aims for overall change of the system, rather than seeking individual revenge for what happened to her loved ones. Through this lens, it seems that empathic anger can work similarly to moral anger, as it results in activism which calls for systemic change.

Another military wife organized a solo picket outside of the Russian Defense ministry. When asked how long she will protest, she states, "we'll continue to fight for our boys because we don't really have a choice."[281] This response shows the type of activism which is brought upon by empathic anger. Instead of seeking broad, systemic change, she is looking to achieve a goal which helps the people she feels have been wronged. However, it is possible that women

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[280] Ibid.,
[281] Ibid.,

have stuck to this singular goal, instead of a more widespread critique of the government, in order to mitigate the risk of their protest.

Some women, such as Maria Andreeva, are campaigning for both her family members to be returned, as well as no other Russians to be called up and sent to the front lines.[282] “We’re against civilians being used in a military conflict. And we want all Russian citizens to understand this could affect them, too” she says. While Andreeva’s protests are originally from an empathetic anger, her call to action shows broader reform, rather than just justice for her loved ones. She continues on, saying, "Some people act like ostriches. They stick their heads in the sand and try not to think about what's happening. I can understand them. It's hard to accept that, in your country, the state doesn't need you to be happy - it just treats you as biological material. But if people want to survive, sooner or later they need to recognise this and say that they don't agree." These quotes from Maria Andreeva show that empathic anger can lead to mobilization, as she is attempting to get others involved and aware of the risk.

Social Networks:

Female activists who are fighting for their husbands to be returned home are part of social networks. Many have connected with each other through online groups for wives and mothers of soldiers. Many women communicate with each other over telegram, and their work is showcased on the channel *The Way Home.* Through this channel, women have learned that they are not alone in their grievances. “This channel is where we come together and discuss our next

[282] Rosenberg, Steve. “‘Send Back Our Husbands’ - Russian Women in Rare Protest.” BBC News, January 23, 2024. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-68056939.

moves" shares a woman named Natalia from the south of Russia. "You realize that there are many more of you who want this war to end."[283] Through these social networks, women can experience many of the encouragement mechanisms which are important for movement participation. This includes the creation of relational ties to other women, which may become especially intense as they are going through a shared experience. According to the literature by Doug McAdam, the more ties or linkages someone has to a movement, the more likely they are to show up at a protest or other high risk action.[284] However, it must be acknowledged that these ties are being created primarily through online interactions, and will not have the intensity that face to face ties can create.[285]

Many women have attempted to use the channel to organize large- scale protests, but these requests have not been authorized by the Russian government.[286] However, they have led to smaller scale protests.

In November of 2023, around 30 women joined a communist party rally near the Kremlin, armed with signs demanding the return of their husband. The protest had been organized on "The Way Home" channel. The protest lasted only five minutes before it was

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[283] Sauer , Pjotr. "'We're Tired of Being Good Girls': Russia's Military Wives and Mothers Protest against Putin." The Guardian, December 25, 2023. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/25/russia-military-wives-mothers-protest-against-putin-war-ukraine-troops-female.

[284] McAdam, D. (1986) Recruitment to high-risk activism: The case of freedom summer. American Journal of Sociology *92*(1), 71.

[285] Ibid.,

[286] Boll-Palievskaya, Daria. "Russia's Women Rise Up." Russia's women rise up – Democracy and society | IPS Journal, March 31, 2024. https://www.ips-journal.eu/topics/democracy-and-society/russias-women-rise-up-7221/.

disrupted by the police. Afterward, the channel posted "We are being heard, keep up the good, sisters."[287]

The Way Home Channel has been allowed to survive in the repressive climate of Russia post invasion. This is in contrast to other networks, such as the Navalny network, which was shut down by the Russian government. The survival of the Way Home Channel and network can be attributed to a long history in Russia of 'Soldiers Mothers' movements, which have collaborated with the Russian state. Denis Skopin writes that 'Soldiers Mothers' movements have been in existence since the 1980s in Russia, which correlated with the Russian campaign in Afghanistan. The work of these organizations has rarely developed into political action, which Oushakane argues is because the Russian state accepted the sufferings of the mothers, and worked with them to build a memorial complex as well as hold a public ceremony in remembrance.[288] Skopin writes that through this, the mothers pain was "domesticated, framed by social rationalization."[289] Additionally, Skopin argues that the work of the Russian mothers has had a limited influence on the social and political life in the country. I believe that the precedent these movements have set has led to the "Way Home" Movement to exist despite the repressive context.

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[287] Konstantinova, Alla. "'Keep up the Good Work, Sisters' The Women behind 'the Way Home' Telegram Channel Mobilizing for Soldiers' Return from Ukraine." Mediazona. Accessed March 31, 2024. https://en.zona.media/article/2023/12/07/putdomoi.
[288] Skopin, Denis. "The Ngo 'Soldiers' Mothers' in Russia and Its Activities: Interpreted Through the Concept of 'Human Dignity.'" *Comparative sociology* 15, no. 6 (2016). 726.
[289] Ibid.,

Conclusion:

This thesis has attempted to identify why individuals have chosen to engage in political protest in Russia, despite the enormous risk and little possibility for change. I identified moral emotions, ideological identification, biographical availability and social and relational ties to the movement as four factors which explain movement participation. This project will contribute to the existing literature through looking at three large scale protest movements in Russia in context with each other. While many pieces of research have looked at the protest movements separately, given the recency of the events in Ukraine, there is a lack of work which looks at the movements together.

When I identified the four factors that I wanted to look at, I originally wished to study how they interacted with each other. I theorized that moral emotions came first, and someone would seek out a social network due to this connection to the movement. While I still see merit to this theory, as the project continued, I began to look at the four factors relationship with political environment and political opportunity. A key takeaway from this thesis is that as repression grows, and political opportunity shrinks, the role of social networks and biographical availability decrease, and the role of ideological identification and moral emotions grow. In looking at the 2011-2012 protest, there was a social network present which activists held both social and relational ties to. In the Navalny network, there was a network which activists held organizational ties to, but relational ties were scarcely mentioned. In the protest movement against the invasion of Ukraine, I found that social networks had largely deteriorated, with a few exceptions. However, the importance of these factors can also be seen in the reverse. When I was researching the 2011-2012 protests, I was surprised how little content I could find which focused

on moral emotions. In interviews with protesters, they were less interested in talking about their own emotional processes, and instead wished to discuss the broader movement and network.

Russian citizens continue every day to take incredible risks in order to express their discontent against their state. I believe that no matter how hard the Russian government attempts to suppress their citizens, protests will continue to take place, as individuals advocate for what they believe is morally right.

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