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Imperial Janus: Patterns of Governance in the Western Borderlands of the Tsarist Empire

Nicklaus Laverty
University of Massachusetts - Amherst, nlaverty@polsci.umass.edu

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A Dissertation Presented

by

NICKLAUS LAVERTY

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Approved as to style and content by:

_____
Jillian Schwedler, Chair

_____
Sergey Glebov, Member

_____
Amel Ahmed, Member

_____
Brian Schaffner, Department Head
Department of Political Science

DEDICATION

To my wife, Mikaela, and my daughter, Annika.

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ABSTRACT

IMPERIAL JANUS: PATTERNS OF GOVERNANCE IN THE WESTERN BORDERLANDS OF THE TSARIST EMPIRE

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NICKLAUS LAVERTY, B.A., UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

Ph.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Jillian Schwedler

Why did the Tsarist Empire opt for different governance strategies in each of the territories of the Western Borderlands (here defined as Poland-Lithuania, the Baltic territories, Finland, and Hetman Ukraine)? The existing political science literature tends to reduce such a question to a distinction between direct and indirect rule, usually developing in the context of a Western European maritime empire. This literature falls short of explaining the Tsarist case and requires the addition of intervening variables concerning the role of local elites and leadership choice. Employing an interdisciplinary literature combining sources from political science, sociology and history, this dissertation develops a structural-institutional approach to explaining patterns of direct and indirect rule that emphasizes the strength and cohesion of local elites, their orientation towards the dominant unit, and the role of leadership choice in the dominant unit. In addition to better accounting for the policy trajectory of the Tsarist Empire, such an explanation can also be applied to other historical and contemporary political systems deciding between centralized and decentralized rule.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The question that my dissertation seeks to answer is: "Why did the Tsarist Empire[1] opt for different patterns of governance in the territories of the Western Borderlands?" The Western Borderlands (here defined as Poland-Lithuania, the Baltics, Finland, and Hetman Ukraine) were incorporated into the Tsarist Empire between the mid-17th century and the early 19th century. Although each of the territories were initially provided with similar (if not identical) political, religious, and economic concessions, by the late 19th centuries their paths had diverged with some territories enjoying significant autonomy while others were ruled more directly. The general trend was the gradual intrusion of central authority on local prerogatives, but some territories (namely, the Baltics and Finland) were far more successful at defending their political position within the empire. Answering my overarching question will not only help to explain the specific case employed here, but can also provide a theoretical model that could be applied to other cases of center-periphery relations.

The literature on state-building and empire provides an important context for this case. The initial process of incorporation tracks closely with patterns of rule under traditional imperial systems, where peripheral territories were afforded a high degree of autonomy so long as they acted as loyal clients of imperial rule and delivered crucial

[1] I have decided to predominantly use the term "Tsarist Empire" in this study for a couple reasons, despite its sometimes questionable pedigree of usage, especially during the Soviet period. "Imperial Russia" or "Russian Empire" are sometimes used as alternatives, but I find these limiting due to the implication of Russian identity in what was a multiethnic empire that actually had Russians as a minority near the end of its existence. Nevertheless, reference to "Russia" or "Tsarist Russia" is also made in the text, but these usages are generally confined to representing how other scholars have termed the Tsarist Empire (especially in the Comparative political science literature, where "Russia" is quite common) or to political developments in the Russian "core" of the empire.

resources to the center, usually in the form of taxation and conscription. As Michael Mann notes, this was usually due to deficiencies in infrastructural capacity and the high costs of employing direct coercion in the time period before rapid transportation was possible.[2] This reality also tracks closely with some of the center-periphery relations discussed in the literature on state-building, such as Margaret Levi's emphasis on the process of bargaining that takes place between the central state and borderland elites.[3]

The general trajectory of encroaching centralization also corresponds to the dynamics detailed in the literature on state-building. Central rulers make concessions during times of geopolitical weakness or to secure the loyalties of newly-conquered territories, but as central rule becomes consolidated and the state needs to extract greater resources in the name of military competition, these concessions give way to more direct rule. This is the classic bellicist argument of state-making, first articulated by Weber and Otto Hintze and later elaborated on by Charles Tilly, Brian Downing, and many others.[4] These same pressures also exerted themselves on the Tsarist Empire, and even if the trajectory of the Tsarist state does not correspond to the classic European examples used in the bellicist literature, the general direction of assertive state-building was undoubtedly present at least from the reign of Peter I onward.

But if this helps to explain why the Tsarist state initially made concessions to the borderlands and then gradually circumscribed those concessions, how are we to explain

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[2] Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]□; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
[3] Margaret Levi, *Of Rule and Revenue*, California Series on Social Choice and Political Economy 13 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
[4] Otto Hintze, *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975); Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*, Rev. pbk. ed, Studies in Social Discontinuity (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992); Brian M. Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1992).

the variations of rule among the different territories? The 'imperial turn' in Tsarist historiography offers one possible explanation, with multiple levels of imperial rule instituted in an ad hoc manner across the varied expanse of the Tsarist Empire. This 'multidimensional' rule was influenced by many factors: the timing of conquest, the level of economic development in the conquered territory, the ethnic and confessional status of the inhabitants, the articulation of political institutions, as well as a multitude of other subtle variations. Historiographically, it is a compelling and nuanced explanation of the actual practices of imperial rule, and similar literatures can be found detailing the multidimensionality of other imperial systems. Any theoretical model must therefore take into account this sense of multidimensionality, even if it does not replicate the conclusions of the historiographical literature.

Recent literature in political science on the differences in direct and indirect rule offers one possible theoretical path that could be applied to more than just historical empires. Gerring, Ziblatt, et al. (2011) offer what they call an 'institutional theory' of direct and indirect rule and focus primarily on the prior level of institutionalization present in a territory before being incorporated by a dominant power.[5] They argue that, *all else being equal,* a higher degree of stateness in the subordinate political unit will lead to indirect rule while a low degree of stateness will lead to direct rule. The reasoning behind this dynamic is that preexisting levels of political institutionalization offer dominant units a political infrastructure to rule through, thus minimizing their costs of rule versus employing the coercion necessary to achieve direct rule. Likewise, the leaders of the subordinate unit will likely want to retain their position, and so will cooperate with

[5] John Gerring et al., "An Institutional Theory of Direct and Indirect Rule," *World Politics* 63, no. 03 (2011): 377–433.

the dominant power. This explanation is likewise extended to explain the likelihood of violent coercion, which is a more frequent recourse in less institutionalized polities because they cannot act as credible negotiating partners and thereby necessitate direct rule.

As Gerring, Ziblatt, et al. caution, this theory is not meant to be exclusive of other theories and is instead a general account of what they consider to be the most important single factor. In addition to the potential interposition of other variables, it is also possible that dominant rulers can make 'mistakes' with respect to their ruling strategy, such as by using force against an institutionalized unit and subsequently finding that the costs of rule are much higher. These mistakes can be attributed to limited information, misplaced priorities, bounded rationality, etc, but they nevertheless impose significant limits on the theory.

The performance of this theory in the case of the Tsarist Empire suggests some possible modifications that could be made in order to produce finer-grained analysis. Under this theory, it is expected that indirect rule would be employed in the more 'statelike' territories (the Baltics, Finland, and Poland-Lithuania) and direct rule would be employed in the less statelike territory (Hetman Ukraine). In reality, direct rule was also employed in Poland-Lithuania and this despite the fact that Poland-Lithuania enjoyed the highest degree of institutionalization, having previously been the only sovereign state among the borderland territories. Poland-Lithuania enjoyed moments of significant autonomy (primarily, the Congress Kingdom of 1815-1830), but the periods of more direct rule are more notable (the late 18th century partitions, and the repressions after the

1830-1 and 1863-4 rebellions). Accounting for the deviation of this highly significant case is imperative.

I find that Poland-Lithuania differed from the expected outcome due to the character of the local elites and the hostility of central elites to the idea of an autonomous Polish Kingdom. Specifically, I find three intervening variables played a significant role in the Polish-Lithuanian case while also still serving to explain the other borderland territories:

- *The strength and cohesion of local elites*
- *The orientation of the local elites*
- *Leadership choice in the dominant unit*

A crucial test of this theoretical contribution is the degree to which it can be used to explain some of the cases employed by Gerring, Ziblatt, et al. These cases (the various colonies of the British Empire, the Incan Empire, colonies in the Americas) do show that prior level of institutionalization was very important in determining whether direct or indirect rule was used, but they also testify to the multidimensional character of imperial rule. Specifically, these cases seem to bear out the importance of local elites and their relations to central rule, whether in the case of the strategic marriage alliances used by the Incan Empire or the kaleidoscopic patterns of governance employed across the states and statelets of British India. Imperial rule was heavily predicated on the cooperation of local elites, and where that cooperation was not forthcoming it led to coercion without regard for prior degree of institutionalization.

In addition to the empirical accuracy of my theoretical contribution, it also adds an important dimension to Gerring, Ziblatt et al.'s model. Although they only set out their

theory as a general but not exclusive explanation of patterns of direct and indirect rule, the sole emphasis on institutions lends a deterministic feel to their analysis. By adding variables that attempt to capture elite interaction between the center and periphery, my contribution adds a concern for actor agency operating within the structural boundaries set by institutions. This emphasis on actor agency is essential because at its root center-periphery relations hinge on principal-agent dynamics. If one side or the other are unwilling to commit to the bargains necessary for indirect rule, institutional variables recede into the background as they can no longer be used as proxies for central rule.

This argument and model have applications to a range of historical and contemporary cases, imperial or otherwise. The first logical extension is to other historical empires, whether contiguous land empires such as the Ottoman or Habsburg or maritime empires like France or Britain. The next logical application would be to contemporary states that lack the infrastructural capacity to institute direct rule without great cost and the bargaining processes they must undergo vis-a-vis peripheral elites. Finally, as Gerring, Ziblatt et al. note, this kind of model also has relevance to federal states of either democratic or authoritarian types, as Ziblatt's prior work indicates.[6] The contemporary Russian Federation offers an interesting cross-historical comparison, as the Kremlin has faced decentralizing pressures in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

States and Empires

[6] Daniel Ziblatt, *Structuring the State: The Formation of Italy and Germany and the Puzzle of Federalism* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2006).

Most contemporary explanations for state-building draw, at least in part, on the argument that military competition was among the most important drivers behind the political institutions that came to form the core of the modern state.[7] This argument derives in a large part from the political writings of the German theorist Otto Hintze, who argued that despite the traditional focus on internal conditions for state-making (which characterizes social contract theory and many Marxist explanations), it was actually foreign policy which had a greater impact on the direction of state development, since foreign policy oriented the polity within a broader state system.[8] Since the state system often resolved its disputes through conflict and violence, all state organization originated in military organization, with a community coming together to be able to project offensive and defensive capabilities. Only after this fact did other purposes of government emerge, usually in conjunction with internal coercion.[9] The most compelling contemporary version of this argument was made by Charles Tilly, who argued that the outcome of this process was by no means intentional, but was instead an accidental byproduct of a series of policies employed to fight wars more effectively. Instead, the pressure of military competition provoked profound changes in domestic resource extraction (both in terms of manpower and economic resources) that favored the development of large, differentiated

[7] In this study, "state" is employed in a manner appropriate to the historical context of state-building in modern Europe. As such, it approximates the Weberian ideal of administrative uniformity over a defined territory, with a formal bureaucracy serving as the mechanism to ensure this uniformity. By extension, it also implies the general processes of centralization that accompanied state-building in continental Europe, even if centralization is no longer key to our understanding of the contemporary state, which can be federal and decentralized as well as unitary and centralized. It could also be taken to imply the process of nationalization that Benedict Anderson describes in his classic text, *Imagined Communities*, but I consider this peripheral to the central, administrative focus of the present study. The term is fraught with complexities, and while my usage is certainly imperfect it serves the purpose set out in this research.
[8] Hintze, *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze*. 159.
[9] Ibid. 181.

administrative structures.[10] Knudsen and Rothstein capture this dynamic in an evocative metaphor:

> The modern state, as an institutional complex, may be compared to a coral reef. Much as coral reefs are shaped by deposits over a long period, so states are shaped by their institutions. Nobody envisaged the national states of Europe in the form we see them today. No one designed their principal components - treasuries, courts, central administrations. Such institutions typically arose as more or less inadvertent byproducts of efforts to accomplish more immediate tasks, such as, classically, the creation and maintenance of armed forces. Yet once come into this world, these institutions lived on, adding layer upon layer to the coral reef.[11]

This overwhelming imperative of military competition thereby molded the context of domestic political rule, providing rulers with a strong incentive to extend the social control of the state. As Joel Migdal puts it, the reason for extending or strengthening social control is framed as a necessity of political survival, where failure to marshal sufficient resources will result in defeat at the hands of external rivals or defeat by internal competitors to power.[12]

If extending internal social control was necessary to secure the geopolitical position of the state, this had a couple important ramifications for the internal makeup of the political system. For one thing, it made the traditional medieval system of overlapping sovereignties inadequate and indeed threatening to the state, since it undermined the ability to exercise control. As Gianfranco Poggi and others have argued, there is a fundamental disjuncture between the internal and external position of the state. While the external position of the state is defined by competition between nominally

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[10] Charles Tilly, "War-making and State-making as Organized Crime," in Social Science Research Council (U.S.) Committee on Latin American Studies Joint, and Committee on Western Europe Joint, *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]□; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985). 172.
[11] Tim Knudsen and Bo Rothstein, "State Building in Scandinavia," *Comparative Politics* 26, no. 2 (January 1, 1994): 203–220, doi:10.2307/422268. 203.
[12] Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1988). 23.

equal units (oftentimes resolved through war), the internal position of the state must be defined by the superiority of the political system over all other political rivals (the classic Weberian argument of the monopoly over the means of violence).[13] The traditional estates system existed in tension with these realities. Poggi offers an argument that fits into the bellicist school, placing the pressures behind state development on the needs for military buildup. This buildup required more organizational capacity and more resources, and required shifting away from the traditional reliance on the estates to an increasing reliance on bureaucratic agencies tasked with pursuing these policies.[14] The estates system diffused political and economic power among different groups within the system, generally with the land-owning gentry possessing the most substantial privileges, but this arrangement proved to be inefficient for the state's external needs. As Tilly argues, states often aimed at some level to homogenize their populations because even though it ran the risk of producing a united front of opposition, it also made it easier for the subject population to identify with the rulers, the rulers to communicate with the population, and to create uniform administrative frameworks.[15] Thus, we have a complex framework to understand the process of state-building, since it not only involves external pressures, but internal strategies for centralizing political power. Tilly frames the process of state-building as including a *ruler*, a *ruling class*, other state *clients*, *opponents, competitors and rivals*, the rest of the *population*, and a *coercive* and *civilian apparatus* to enforce the state's policies.[16]

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[13] Gianfranco Poggi, *The State: Its Nature, Development, and Prospects* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1990). 23-5.
[14] Ibid. 66-7.
[15] Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*. 106-7.
[16] Ibid. 34-5.

This approach to understanding state-building has been elegantly applied to a number of historical and contemporary cases. Tilly separates the cases into capital-intensive trajectories and coercive-intensive trajectories, with Western Europe following the former and Eastern Europe the latter. France, Britain, and Prussia are often employed as the classic examples of state-building, with Prussia clearly demonstrating the military roots of political change. As Samuel Finer shows, after the defeat at Jena, the Prussian government under Hardenburg, Stein and Scharnhorst pursued radical state-building from above, to try and address the deficiencies of the Prussian state. The reform efforts ended up being shadows of what was intended due to the obstruction of traditional, landed forces, but the changes were still significant and can be paralleled in many ways to the changes pursued after Russia's defeat in the Crimean War.[17] Beyond the classic examples, Henry Wright argues that we can actually see similar dynamics in older political systems (he uses the example of polities in Madagascar and Mesopotamia) with intense competition leading to a more thoroughly-articulated political system, even if those systems do not closely resemble the bureaucratic complex of the contemporary nation-state.[18] Knudsen and Rothstein find that the same logic holds in the Scandinavian countries, especially in Sweden and Denmark.[19] Likewise, the model has been applied profitably to more recent cases, with Cameron Thies expanding the model to include geopolitical rivalry (not necessarily always military rivalry) in Latin America, as well as

[17] Samuel Finer, "State- and nation-building in Europe: the role of the military," in Social Science Research Council (U.S.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, Studies in Political Development 8 (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1975). 153-4.
[18] Henry T. Wright, "Early State Dynamics as Political Experiment," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 62, no. 3 (October 1, 2006): 305–319. 314.
[19] Knudsen and Rothstein, "State Building in Scandinavia."

in parts of Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East.[20] Thomas Ertman and Brian Downing have also extended the bellicist argument to explain other state dynamics, including the variation in regime type and the likelihood of a state becoming democratic. Ertman argues that variation of political regimes in Europe can be explained by examining 1) the organization of local government after state formation, 2) the timing of sustained geopolitical competition, and 3) the influence of strong representative assemblies.[21] The timing of geopolitical competition in stimulating state-building was "nonsimultaneous," and so the timing had a large impact on the type of state built. States that began processes of formation before 1450 had to rely on structures and expertise that would become increasingly outdated, while later state-builders could exploit more recent developments towards the end of constructing "proto-modern bureaucracies."[22] Likewise, Downing argues that democracy tended to develop in cases where rulers did not need to engage in heavy domestic resource mobilization in response to military competition, as it allowed the persistence of medieval institutions and constitutionalism. In states that responded to international pressures with extensive resource mobilization, the more likely outcome was military-bureaucratic absolutism.[23] (Incidentally, he excludes Tsarist Russia from this schema as it lacked a feudal constitutional order.)[24]

That being said, applying this framework of state-building to the contemporary world is not without complications. Different patterns of political development and armed

[20] Cameron G. Thies, "State Building, Interstate and Intrastate Rivalry: A Study of Post-Colonial Developing Country Extractive Efforts, 1975-2000," *International Studies Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (March 1, 2004): 53–72. Cameron G. Thies, "War, Rivalry, and State Building in Latin America," *American Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 3 (July 1, 2005): 451–465. Cameron G. Thies, "National Design and State Building in Sub-Saharan Africa," *World Politics* 61, no. 4 (October 1, 2009): 623–669.
[21] Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, UK□; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). 6.
[22] Ibid. 26-8.
[23] Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change*. 9.
[24] Ibid. 38-43.

conflict necessitate modifications, especially since contemporary state-building exists in a context where the national state is already a fact of political life. As Tilly cautions, by and large the historical European experience is not broadly comparable to the contemporary world, but the experience of Europe may point to general dynamics that occur across time in state-building. The military and war-making connection may be just such a dynamic.[25] As such, the general model has been modified to take into account differences in contemporary state-building, including the previously mentioned effort by Cameron Thies to expand the criteria from military competition to strategic competition, given the lack of open interstate warfare in regions like Latin America.[26] Likewise, the relative lack of persistent interstate warfare (at least compared to the formative period in European history) and its replacement by intrastate warfare and violence has been used as a mechanism for explaining the emergence of weak states. One of Migdal's "sufficient" conditions for the emergence of a strong state is the presence of an external military threat. If a threat exists, it gives the rulers a strong incentive to marshal resources as efficiently as possible to guarantee that the state possesses enough power to fend off challenges. In the absence of this threat, rulers may have the incentive to protect their own rule and come to understandings with internal rivals, but this may result in a weak, rather than a strong, state.[27] This explanation is employed by Jeffrey Herbst to explain the emergence of profoundly weak states in sub-Saharan Africa, since the post-colonial norm of territorial inviolability reduced the prevalence of interstate conflict.[28]

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[25] Tilly, "War-making and State-making as Organized Crime," in *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*. 81-2.
[26] Cameron G. Thies, "War, Rivalry, and State Building in Latin America." 460.
[27] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*.
[28] Jeffrey Ira Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*, Princeton Studies in International History and Politics (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2000).

How does Tsarist Russia fit into the bellicist model of state-building? As a Eurasian land power, it consistently faced threats not only from Europe, but also from the Ottoman Empire and a number of groups on the Central Asian steppe. Pressure to keep up with the military advances of rival powers was overwhelming, and its relative position of technical backwardness only sharpened this need. It is characteristic to begin an account of changes in Russian military organization with the reign of Peter I, but as Michael Paul points out, shocks to Russia's military infrastructure can actually be dated back to the mid-16th century, as the rival powers of Poland-Lithuania, Sweden, and the Livonian Germans began to adopt gunpowder weapons and large contingents of artillery.[29] Sweden, though eventually eclipsed by other powers, may have been the most important source of external pressure for Russian state-building (as well as for Prussia and other German states), since the combination of superior state organization and mobile military forces provided the Scandinavian power with significant victories over its rivals.[30] Peter I, when he began his own military (and, consequently, state-building) revolution in the late 17th-early 18th century, consciously modeled his reforms on Sweden's government infrastructure, as well as adopting influences from Prussia, although these were obviously altered to take into account the radically different social system present in the Tsarist Empire. The eventual outcome to these reform efforts also points to another necessary caution for the state-building model: the role of contingency and the presence of preexisting institutions necessarily modify state-building efforts and militate against determinism. As Poggi argues, the outcomes of pivotal military conflicts (such as the Great Northern War in the case of Russia) largely dictates *which* institutions

[29] Michael C. Paul, "The Military Revolution in Russia, 1550-1682," *The Journal of Military History* 68, no. 1 (January 1, 2004): 9–45. 37.
[30] Knudsen and Rothstein, "State Building in Scandinavia." 205.

will be adopted, leading to different government infrastructures in different cases even if the same general dynamic (increased centralization and bureaucratization) is present.[31]

Up to this point, I have been emphasizing the external conditions of state-building, but it is also necessary to consider how these external pressures translate to changes in domestic policies and institutions. The most important domestic effect of external military competition is increased extraction from the population (in terms of both taxation and conscription of military personnel), as the state shifts from indirect to direct rule (since indirect rule is less efficient when it comes to the task of extraction).[32] The theoretical approach often employed to understand this process of extraction is referred to as the predatory theory of the state. As Margaret Levi argues, in predatory theory rulers will try to monopolize economic and political power to increase their bargaining position vis-a-vis powerful internal groups. The stocks of power these groups possess, versus the transaction costs (monitoring, enforcement, etc.) that the state has to pay, will increase their bargaining position and make it more likely that they will receive concessions from the ruler to guarantee loyalty. Tax exemptions, economic privileges, and some degree of autonomy are common outcomes of this bargaining process.[33] Gaining compliance is the primary consideration of state-builders, and building coercive capacity is at the root of efforts to create compliance. The state must possess enough coercive capacity to suppress internal rivals and to extract resources from the population, but it cannot "plunder" the population lest it threaten its own stability. The existence of strain, in the form of

[31] Poggi, *The State*. 99-100.
[32] Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*. 25.
[33] Levi, *Of Rule and Revenue*. 12-14.

ecological pressure or foreign enemies, can also increase the likelihood of gaining compliance.[34]

Predatory theories of the state view the state as an agent capable of imposing itself on civil society to some degree, and this relationship between the state and civil society is very much framed in the cost-benefit analysis lens of rational choice.[35] Migdal's definition of the state's capabilities meshes well with this approach, as he emphasizes the state's ability to penetrate society, regulate social relations, extract resources, and use those resources in determined ways.[36] Extraction of resources helps to support the primary goal of the state, but different strategies to achieve this end must be assessed based on the costs they would incur. This differs from my previous discussion of state-building, which more closely approximates what Michael Mann calls "institutional statism." Institutional statism emphasizes institutional structures over actors, since those structures provide constraints over all actors in the system and will vary across different states.[37] In addition to the strategy of side-payments (concessions to internal groups), rulers have other options for gaining compliance, such as the use of outright coercion or what Levi calls "quasi-voluntary compliance" (such as would be provided under the rule of law, where individuals are aware that crimes will be punished). Coercion is costly, and that cost is broken down into effective monitoring and enforcement. Coercion will not completely eliminate noncompliance, but the goal is to minimize it through the use of technologies and strategies. The less extensive the administrative framework, the more

[34] Ibid. 42-44.
[35] Cameron G. Thies, “State Building, Interstate and Intrastate Rivalry.” 54.
[36] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*. 4-5.
[37] Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*. Volume II, 48-54.

costly coercion becomes.[38] Quasi-voluntary compliance is another strategy for gaining compliance, by creating a system where individuals will choose to comply and where noncompliance will be met with punitive sanctions. For this to work, the threat of punishment from the state must be credible, and the individual must believe that others are also complying. A perception that others are free-riding will increase the likelihood of noncompliance by creating concerns of exploitation while also undermining the ruler's credibility.[39]

The effect of this effort to gain internal compliance is that rulers must engage in a complicated game of balancing external and internal rivals. Thies points of that while strong external rivals may result in strengthened state capacity, the presence of strong internal rivals may have the opposite effect. States that have strong external rivals are generally more capable of extracting resources from society (since they can offer society protection from those rivals), but the efficiency of extraction relies on successful bargaining with internal rivals.[40] Even if these efforts at bargaining are successful, it is uncertain whether the presence of internal rivals would enhance or impair the state's overall strength. Since the state will need to raise revenue to impose its will on internal rivals, extraction will likely increase (at least in the short term) on already-loyal portions of the populace, potentially straining this relationship. In addition, if the bargaining with internal rivals includes substantial economic concessions (such as tax exemptions, conscription exemptions, or other economic privileges), it may impair the state's overall extractive capacity, which would weaken the state vis-a-vis rivals that don't necessarily

[38] Levi, *Of Rule and Revenue*. 50.
[39] Ibid. 52-54.
[40] Cameron G. Thies, "State Building, Interstate and Intrastate Rivalry." 53-54.

make the same kinds of bargains.[41] However, this imbalanced arrangement could also disappear in the long term, as actual military conflict introduces a "ratchet effect" that increases the ceiling on tolerable levels of extraction. The theory of the ratchet effect argues that war disrupts institutional arrangements such that the state is able to expand its administrative apparatus, though it is unlikely that such a ratchet effect would completely eliminate the privileges that internal groups enjoy.[42]

Predatory theory has extensive relevance to the state-building experience in both contemporary and historical cases. The process of state-building in Europe sometimes required appealing to the people over the traditional elites, sometimes required negotiating with the traditional elites without the participation of the people, and sometimes involved direct coercion on the part of rulers to create the desired ends. The tradition of kingship in Europe helped to advance this process, but the sheer volume of political entities that were eventually absorbed indicates the contingency and chaos of the process, as well as the necessity of bargaining.[43] This process ranged from the stable arrangement made between the Prussian monarchy and the Junkers to the relative chaos experienced between the estates in France and the king. As Joseph Strayer notes, the lack of preexisting strong local institutions in England made the task of spreading administrative rule comparatively easy, since it was not necessary to negotiate as much with local notables or to rely as much on bureaucratic enforcement. In countries where this was not true, the process of state-building was far more difficult due to the

[41] Ibid. 60.
[42] Cameron G. Thies, “War, Rivalry, and State Building in Latin America.” 454.
[43] Social, *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*. 24-5.

concessions made by the state.[44] In contemporary cases, much the same relationship is present. In Latin America, where Thies identifies strategic over military rivalry as the most important impulse, there is still a strong correlation between external rivals and increased extractive capacity, even if the states had to feed more slowly due to the absence of overt military threats.[45] Conversely, Migdal finds that the presence of strong internal rivals may help to explain the emergence of weak states. As societies in the developing world indicate, part of the struggle of state-building has revolved around accommodating powerful organizations within the territory when there is not sufficient social control to suppress those organizations or enforce compliance.[46] On the other hand, increasing extractive capacity may still be present in these societies, if only on a smaller scale than the dramatic examples of Europe. Sub-Saharan Africa, often used as the example for explaining weak states, still shows a strong relationship between military spending, productivity, and extraction levels, but the scale is much smaller because productivity is comparatively low.[47]

The logic of predatory theory also applies to state-building in the Tsarist Empire, but with some important qualifications. In Western and parts of Central Europe, the process of increasing extraction through taxation corresponded with concessions on the part of the state to powerful internal groups and to the population as a whole (usually in the form of expanded citizenship). Tilly refers to this as the capital-intensive or the capitalized-coercion mode of state-building, depending on the degree to which the state employed direct coercion as part of its bargaining. In contrast, the coercion-intensive

[44] Joseph R. Strayer, *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1970). 47-48.
[45] Cameron G. Thies, "War, Rivalry, and State Building in Latin America." 463.
[46] Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*. 31-32.
[47] Cameron G. Thies, "State Building, Interstate and Intrastate Rivalry." 56.

mode, which characterized Prussia, Russia, and other Eastern European polities, emphasized compelled extraction without the same concessions on the part of the state as in Western Europe.[48] Russia was the exemplar of the coercion-intensive mode, with Tilly placing it at the top of the coercion scale and the bottom of the capitalization scale (since Russia lacked urban centers of comparable capital power or a significant merchant class). As a result, the social structure in Russia produced different outcomes in how the state responded to external pressure. Class structure in part dictated the kinds of struggles that emerged during state-building. In Western Europe, the capital-intensive nature of society made taxation the most salient issue. In Eastern Europe, the disposition of the land was the most important feature and the source of class subjection.[49] Basing resource extraction off of land ownership was less efficient than the capital extraction proceeding in other parts of Europe, but it had the merits of being stable and predictable.

The imposition and administration of taxation proved to be difficult for a few reasons in the Tsarist Empire, and that difficulty resulted in specific institutional arrangements. The first major problem was demographic: the Tsarist Empire had a huge population, but that population was spread over a vast territory. As Paul notes, Russia (and other Eastern European powers like Poland) had a population density of around six persons per square kilometer. In contrast, France had a population density of around 40 per square kilometer, and the German lands were generally in the 50 range. In addition to the dispersed nature of the population, Tsarist subjects were also poorer than in other states, creating a tax pool that was both spread out and resource-poor.[50] The Tsarist state also lacked an easy source of taxation, as Britain enjoyed with its low-cost customs

[48] Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*. 30.
[49] Ibid. 60, 99-100.
[50] Paul, "The Military Revolution in Russia, 1550-1682." 38.

duties. Initial efforts to address this deficiency comprised a number of direct taxes on commodities such as salt, as well as other less obvious solutions such as taxing travel (Richard Hellie notes that there were over 280 distinct taxes in 17th century Russia), but these proved difficult to manage and either were revoked or brought in less revenue than desired.[51] These inadequacies produced the solution of binding peasants to the land - the imposition of serfdom. As Gabriel Ardant argues, the imposition of serfdom arose due to a lack of capital exchange, making indirect taxes insufficient (as in the British customs duties), but the state lacked the capacity to levy direct taxes and prevent taxpayer flight. The solution, the tying of individuals to land to guarantee their compliance, was the solution to the problem of extraction.[52] The need for reliable food production also drove the imposition of serfdom, as Russia lacked the capital and agricultural productivity of Western Europe. As a result, the bargain between the gentry and the state produced an inefficient, but predictable, system of agricultural development that was adequate for food production through the manorial system.[53]

Serfdom may have solved the short-term problem of creating a stable tax base, but it made future policy changes and administrative expansion more difficult. It did nothing to enhance coordination with local government (or to strengthen local government), and it created an incentive structure for the gentry that guaranteed they would resist any changes to the status quo. These deficiencies became apparent when the military costs of the Great Northern War stressed the state's financial standing and triggered Peter I's efforts at reform. Military need undoubtedly drove Peter's reforms, and his successes

[51] Ibid. 43.
[52] Gabriel Ardant, "Financial policy and economic infrastructure of modern states and nations," in *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*. 197.
[53] Charles Tilly, Ibid. 424.

were reflected in the tripling of the tax burden and budget, and a more aggressive effort to take a census for taxation purposes. Since local institutions were underdeveloped, Peter mostly relied on the army to oversee these efforts, while using decrees to force through the reforms. This arrangement proved unsustainable after much of it was reversed under his successors, but it at least laid the groundwork for later efforts of state-building.[54] However, when Catherine II decided to expand on the Petrine reforms to create a well-ordered, more centralized state, these problems resurfaced. Catherine's ambitious provincial reforms efforts were undone due to the lack of Tsarist penetration in the countryside and the lack of skilled professionals able to fill the roles that were envisioned, both in terms of the government apparatus and in other areas like education. The desire was to undermine local abuse of power which was one of the major stimulants of the Pugachev rebellion, but the outcomes demonstrated that Petersburg only possessed limited infrastructural capability to effect lasting change.[55] This limited capacity remained up until the end of the Tsarist state, despite periodic efforts by Tsars to increase administrative control.

This problem was heightened in the borderlands (not only the Western borderlands, but it was most salient there), as lack of Tsarist capacity came into contact with historical grants of autonomy and relatively powerful internal groups like the Polish *szlachta* or the Baltic German gentry. As Thies notes, in the predatory theory of the state borderlands that possessed strong groups or significant resources enjoy even more leverage in bargaining vis-a-vis the center, making it more likely that border regions will

[54] Reinhard Bendix, *Kings or People: Power and the Mandate to Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978). 501-3.
[55] Ibid. 512-3.

enjoy substantial privileges versus the rest of the territory.[56] Given the dramatic differences in coercive capacity, the Tsarist state certainly had the ability to force submission on the borderlands if they flouted central rule too egregiously, but as the case of the suppression of Poland indicates, the use of this coercion was very costly and as predatory theory would predict, it made the state weaker vis-a-vis external rivals. Moreover, this is a consideration that goes beyond the time period I am considering, as the argument could be made that the same dynamic applies to Post-Soviet Russia and its considerable hinterland. As Alexseev argues, the collapse of Soviet institutions released central-periphery conflicts that had been kept under wraps and presented Boris Yeltsin with much the same choice that Tsarist administrators had: to either coerce or to accommodate peripheral regions seeking greater autonomy from the center.[57] Yeltsin opted for accommodation, with the notable exception of Chechnya, and Alexseev argues that this was actually better for the territorial integrity of the Federation than other commentators believed, because it was the only viable strategy for holding together such a vast, diverse territory. Instead, Alexseev saw the greatest threat to the Russian Federation as being the possibility that the center may try to reassert strong control over the regions, bringing it into conflict with local elites and potentially facilitating the merger of civic and ethnic nationalisms.[58] The efforts of the Putin government to follow just such a path may therefore have interesting effects down the road, making predatory theory relevant not only to my cases, but also to the contemporary Russian state.

[56] Cameron G. Thies, "State Building, Interstate and Intrastate Rivalry." 55.
[57] Mikhail A. Alexseev, "Decentralization Versus State Collapse: Explaining Russia's Endurance," *Journal of Peace Research* 38, no. 1 (January 1, 2001): 101–106. 102.
[58] Ibid. 105.

The state-building literature provides important theoretical context for the relationship between the Tsarist center and the Western Borderlands. If we are seeking to explain the differences in imperial policy towards the constituent parts of the Western Borderlands it is necessary to understand the role played by general European military competition and the internal transformations it wrought in the Tsarist state. Upon coming into contact with strategic rivals employing more advanced military and governing institutions (Sweden, Prussia, etc.), the Tsarist state sought to 'catch up' by reforming its own institutions and increasing its domestic extractive capability. When increased resource extraction became pivotal for military success, the state was faced with two options: accommodation with internal elites to secure these resources or coercive action to directly gain control of these resources. Although the state did indeed employ coercion as one of its tools, it would have proven inadequate as the sole tactic given the geographic expanse and diversity of the Tsarist Empire. This is where the bargaining process described by Levi and others becomes relevant, as the state made significant concessions (in the form of serfdom for the entire empire and in the form of high levels of autonomy in the borderlands) to secure its goal. This bargaining then set the stage for the subsequent transformations of the Tsarist political system, as the internal elites that proved capable of retaining their leverage vis-a-vis the state were also successful in retaining their privileged positions, with the obverse also being true.

The literature on empire[59] has a great deal of overlap with the literature on state-building, both with regards to the role of external threats and the predatory aspect of

[59] If anything, the term “empire” is more problematic than the term “state,” and my usage reflects some serious choices and concessions that may not reflect the wide variety of imperial practices that have existed throughout history. My usage of empire is primarily structural in nature, emphasizing the distinction between the imperial “core” and the “periphery.” The distinction between core and periphery helps to

resource extraction. Large, multi-national empires like the Tsarist Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Ottoman Empire (just to take the examples in closest contact with the European mainstream) experienced these pressures in the same way as Western and Central Europe and attempted to make many of the same adaptations to address the pressures. However, the starting point for these political units was dramatically different both in terms of social and political structure, and these pressures threatened the stability of the imperial status quo more so than was experienced in the rest of Europe. The most salient difference was that of space - unlike the far-flung empires of Britain, France and Spain, the Tsarist Empire was a territorially-extensive but contiguous multiethnic empire. This contiguity made it impossible for the Tsarist state to completely separate political administration in the core versus the periphery, and in many cases that distinction between core and periphery was ephemeral and subject to change (the case of Ukraine is the best example of the shifting definition of the imperial core). Moreover, the sheer vastness of imperial space heightened the problem of state-building, as the traditional reliance on local elites had to give way to creeping administrative centralization. In the Tsarist Empire, the largest contiguous political unit on the face of the planet, managing space persistently bedeviled the project of state-building.

This reality comes into conflict with how the Tsarist state presented itself, and how it has been presented by some scholars. Tsarist ideology framed the entire territory

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capture the administrative heterogeneity that obtained in most empires, as imperial administrators made decisions for the mode of rule in reaction to local conditions. This distinction is "easiest" in discontiguous, maritime empires (such as those of Britain and France), since there was a clearer distinction between core and periphery. In extensive, contiguous empires like the Tsarist political system, this is obviously more problematic. Despite these problems, however, the structural definition contrasts in a useful manner with my usage of " state," as it helps to create an effective continuum ranging from total administrative heterogeneity to total administrative uniformity. Naturally, even the most well-articulated examples of states and empires rest somewhere between the two poles on the continuum, but I think it captures a central tension between the impulse towards regional autonomy and "harmonized" administrative rule.

of the empire as the Tsar's personal patrimony, which could be dispensed with or administered as the reigning sovereign saw fit. Alongside this patrimonial conception of rule was the attendant notion that the Tsar possessed absolute power over this domain, a power that exceeded the limits of Western absolutism, which at least had to balance itself to a degree with the estates. However, this conception of power did not translate well into practice, as Tsarist pretensions came into conflict with the realities of projecting power over extensive territories. Michael Mann provides us with a useful rubric for conceptualizing this conflict, as he emphasizes two different dimensions of power: despotic and infrastructural. *Despotic* power is the power of the state to take actions without the regular input or negotiation from civil society. *Infrastructural* power is the ability of the state to penetrate civil society and logistically support its decisions, guarantee that compliance is achieved, etc.[60] Empires fall along the high-despotic, low-infrastructural portion of the axis, as they accumulate territory without simultaneously accumulating the means to directly rule that territory. The costs of extending infrastructural power through the buildup of local administration and police forces (the shift from indirect to direct rule that Tilly highlights as one of the hallmarks of the modern state) were generally too high, leading the state to pursue alternative strategies.[61]

Territorially-extensive societies in the pre-modern era by necessity ruled through local intermediaries, since routine political control could not easily outpace the maximum marching distance of military forces (around 75-100 miles from the center). This only changed with the increased agricultural base of support in the 19th century.[62] Hence, even

[60] Michael Mann, *States, War and Capitalism: Studies in Political Sociology* (Oxford [Eng.]□; New York, NY, USA: Basil Blackwell, 1988). 5-7.
[61] Tilly, "War-making and State-making as Organized Crime," in *Bringing the State Back In*. 174-5.
[62] Mann, *States, War and Capitalism*. 23.

the most despotic rulers could only pretend to real territorial control. Older empires relied primarily on standing militaries and conquest, as military force provided a more extensive radius of action than political control or economic integration. The force required a base of production to guarantee the resources and manpower for military action, so the different stages relied on one another for long-term success.[63] The absolutist states of modern Europe enjoyed essentially unlimited despotic power, but this accompanied severe limitations on infrastructural power. Naked coercion was costly and difficult to maintain, so the most effective strategy became targeted coercion combined with divide-and-rule tactics involving negotiation with powerful corporate groupings.[64] This characterized all European states to an extent, but the reliance on local elites was more pivotal in the contiguous empires of Europe, as the state did not have a realistic capability to implement direct rule (in contrast to states like France or Prussia which were able to effectively centralize power). As a result, the Tsarist Empire more resembled a patchwork of local autonomies (both political and economic) rather than the idealized patrimony of the Tsar.

By comparison, political units that relied more on infrastructural power responded more adeptly to the challenges of state-making. Although medieval Britain lacked the despotic power of Rome (or Russia), the collective power gained through territorial coordination with the estates was actually quite formidable, with the King in Parliament acting as the epicenter of this government by quasi-consent.[65] This made the process of building up government infrastructure less difficult in Britain, and made the state more flexible in responding to external challenges. The United States, a classical "weak" state

[63] Ibid. 60-3.
[64] Ibid. 191.
[65] Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*. Volume I. 444-5.

in terms of despotic power, also illustrates this dynamic, as cooperation between the state and civil society produced a durable status quo even though the state did not possess untrammeled police power.[66] In the contemporary period, we can continue to observe this interplay between despotic and infrastructural power, with Post-Soviet Russia and Sub-Saharan Africa both fitting the mold of too much despotic power and too little infrastructural power. The cost structure African states faced when extending their authority not only involved the administrative and security costs of extending the state's writ, but also the infrastructural costs given the lower levels of development in the hinterlands. The further away from the center the state sought to go, the more the cost radically scaled upward, with capitals becoming islands of control in seas of underadministration.[67] Africa is characterized by low population densities which can make it costly and difficult for the state to achieve administrative control over its entire territory (given the paucity of skilled personnel for administration). The former USSR actually approximates the same kind of population density, which was also much more so the case for Tsarist Russia.[68]

The differences in the relationship between the emergent state and civil society had important consequences for social structure. As Giddens notes, although the estates acted in conjunction with the state in parts of Western Europe, that was not the only possible outcome. In Russia, Prussia, Spain, and other absolutist states the estates were repressed or made to conform to the state's wishes. The state may have preserved the

[66] Ibid. Volume II. 59-60.
[67] Herbst, *States and Power in Africa*. 23-4.
[68] Ibid. 15-6.

privileges of the gentry, but it was hardly involved in an equal partnership with them.[69] In Western Europe, coordination between the estates and the government resulted in civil and political concessions as the price for the extension of state power. This process gradually resulted in the extension of rights and privileges to other sectors of the population, such as the bourgeoisie and eventually the working classes. In Eastern Europe, coordination resulted not in political rights, but in economic privileges and the extension of serfdom. In this case, the adherence of the estates was needed for the social base of the state, but it was an adversarial process. Eisenstadt summarizes the political goals of imperial rulers as being directed towards the extension of the state's power vis-a-vis internal groups, either by weakening traditional loyalties to internal rivals and shifting that loyalty to the state, or by co-opting major groups so that they help to reinforce the general power of the empire itself.[70] One method of binding the gentry to the state was through military service. As Hintze asserts, maintenance of the army was the state's primary purpose, and the extension of the tax burden and the recruitment of the estates into this purpose characterized the emergent police state of modern Europe. The alliance with the gentry meant that the officer corps assumed a distinctly noble cast, and that social privilege and military duty became fused, much as occurred in Prussia.[71]

In the long-term, however, the solutions of serfdom and the transformation of the role of the gentry proved to be unstable. In Western and Central Europe, the emergent state worked to mobilize the entire population in support of state-building, whether through the expansion of taxation or the expansion of military service. Tsarist Russia

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[69] Anthony Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981). 96-7.
[70] S. N. Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires* (New Brunswick (U.S.A.): Transaction Publishers, 1993). 143-4.
[71] Hintze, *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze*. 201-2.

attempted to replicate these efforts in the empire, but given the fact that the social system was predicated on the absolute subservience of the majority of the population, mobilizational capacity was obviously limited. As Hintze observes, the Tsarist state implemented universal military service (which started as lifetime duration and was later shortened to a still-brutal 25 years for those conscripted) without also extending some degree of citizenship to those subjected to the policy. This disjunction between extraordinary demands without any simultaneous privilege was an unstable arrangement, a judgment that was borne out by the empire's experiences in warfare after 1850 (and especially in WWI, where subject discontent with military service helped to bring about the empire's collapse).[72] Moreover, when the state made overdue efforts to ameliorate and eliminate serfdom during the Great Reforms, it served to undermine the basis of gentry loyalty to the state, even though the gentry were able to make sure that the terms were not that painful to their immediate economic interests.[73] By shifting the dependency of the peasantry on the gentry to the state, the state hoped to construct a more durable basis of political control, but the modesty of the reforms did not garner much appreciation from the population and set the tone for the later battles over land tenure and ownership that would characterize the waning decades of the 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th century. The end of the old order confirmed the final victory of the crown over the gentry, but at the cost of imperial stability.

As Eisenstadt summarizes, the process of political change in territorially-extensive empires was sparked by a combination of external and internal pressures, often in contradiction to one another. The external pressures, whether economic or military

[72] Ibid. 212-3.
[73] Jerome Blum, *The End of the Old Order in Rural Europe* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1978). 373.

threats, exerted pressure on internal conditions by sharpening the need of the state to extract more resources from society and to mobilize greater manpower to meet threats. This drive for greater extraction and mobilization served to destabilize the status quo within imperial systems, since the internal pressures necessitated the diffusion of power, the reliance on local clients, and cultural autonomy.[74] In Tsarist Russia, there was an attempt to extend some form of law throughout the territory of the empire and to construct an adequate policing apparatus capable of surveiling the population and enforcing the writ of the state, but state incapacity and traditions of local rule cut against this process. As Kivelson notes, the process of mapping territory which was generally associated with increasing state power in other European cases actually helps to demonstrate the weakness of the Tsarist state. The profusion of competing maps and the inability of the Tsarist state to adjudicate such disputes led to bogged-down litigation processes, an inconsistent application of law, and arbitrary verdicts handed down by judges.[75] Likewise, although the state attempted to construct a police state in its major cities to suppress dissent, the same was not true of policing in the countryside. As Giddens argues, one of the characteristics of the transformation of the modern state was the shift from violent, exemplary modes of punishment to incarceration and surveillance.[76] However, Tsarist capabilities were so limited in this respect (the Third Section and the gendarme simply did not have the numbers to cover Russia's huge territory) that the state often fell back onto the older, exemplary modes of punishment, as with the execution of the Decembrists and the mock execution of the Petrashevsty group.

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[74] Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires*. lx-lxi
[75] Valerie A. Kivelson, "Cartography, Autocracy and State Powerlessness: The Uses of Maps in Early Modern Russia," *Imago Mundi* 51 (January 1, 1999): 83–105. 98-100.
[76] Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*. 183-4. Also see Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

Thus, although the Tsarist state was responding to the same external pressures as the rest of Europe (and in fact, stronger pressures due to the presence of threats from both the West and the East), the process of state-building that these pressures triggered was largely incompatible with the existing institutional structure of the empire. The territory of the empire was too vast for the state to expand its administrative functions adequately to all regions, and so the state settled for a thin veneer of administrative structure that allowed it to extract enough money and manpower to respond to external military threats. Serfdom, the means by which the state co-opted the loyalty of the gentry, also cut against state-building processes, as it removed far too much of the population from any sort of meaningful civic life, drastically limiting the mobilizational capacity of the state. And perhaps most importantly, the diversity of the multinational empire militated against a centralized, well-ordered police state on the Prussian model, and the more the state attempted to move in that direction, the more resistance it inspired in the non-Russian territories of the empire. In Mann's terminology, the Tsarist Empire was all despotic power and little infrastructural power, leaving the state adrift without the same coordinating capabilities of states like Britain, France or Prussia.

The "Imperial Turn"

Aside from the treatment of empire in political science and sociology, there has been renewed interest in the concept of empire in the field of history following the collapse of the Soviet Union. This so-called "imperial turn" has become an indispensable tool for reimagining the political history and institutions of Eurasia, shifting emphasis away from the centralized autocracy of imperial capitals to the actual governance of the imperial

periphery. This historical literature also performs an important function in this study, as it helps to bridge the divide between the concepts of state and empire and explain some of the transformations that occurred in the Western Borderlands in the later decades of the Tsarist Empire. Specifically, Zygmunt Bauman distinguishes between two types of state behaviors, that of the "gamekeeper" and that of the "gardener".[77] The transformation of Tsarist policy in the Western Borderlands from their incorporation until the collapse of the Tsarist Empire largely corresponds to the shift of the Tsarist government from a "gamekeeper" position (containing and controlling a diverse population) to the "gardener" position (remaking the population along the lines envisioned in the concept of the national state). This shift also tracked closely to the increasing importance that was placed on defining what it meant to be "Russian" in the 19th century, with alternatives including a narrow, coherent ethnic grouping, a pan-ethnic "nation", an Orthodox identity, or a linguistic identity, with significant overlap between many of these categories (as can be seen in the polemics of the Russian publicist Mikhail Katkov).[78]

The debate within history over the meaning of empire provides illumination on several fronts: on the relationship between empire and the nation-state, on the relationship of Tsarist Russia to the experiences of other "nationalizing" states, and on the variations in governance over different regions of the empire. The first problem lies with defining the concept of empire itself, and how that concept relates to the experience and structures of the modern national state. Suny defines empire as constituting an "institutionalized hierarchy, maintenance of difference between ruling metropole and ruled periphery" that is fundamentally incompatible with notions of democracy and

[77] Nicholas Breyfogle, "Enduring Imperium: Russia/Soviet Union/Eurasia as Multiethnic, Multiconfessional Space," *Ab Imperio* no. 1 (2008): 75–129. 108-9.
[78] Ibid. 83.

popular sovereignty.[79] Both Suny and Seymour Becker place empire and the nation-state on opposite ends of the political spectrum, largely due to the concept of national self-determination that is theoretically incompatible with empire.[80] Moreover, as Suny notes, empires tend to have porous boundaries while nation-states are more exclusively-defined, partly due to the political expediency connected with the inclusiveness of heterogeneous imperial systems. However, Suny also notes that while this holds true for empire and nation-state as ideal types, in actual practice, most political systems will combine some elements of each, significantly blurring the distinction.[81] It is at this point that traditional sociological or typological definitions of empire become problematic, since they tend to imply a certain degree of fixity in how empires are structured and governed. This problem may be connected to the tendency to define empire in a way consistent with the discontinuous European overseas empires, which Becker reminds us have not historically been the modal form of empires.[82]

Nicholas Breyfogle and Alexander Semyonov offer alternative methods of conceptualizing empires (and the Tsarist Empire in particular), with these methods aiming to capture the multi-dimensionality and unevenness of imperial practice within specific imperial units. Breyfogle actually opts to eschew the concept of "empire" in favor of the more flexible concept of "imperium" since the latter concept escapes the typological tendencies of the former. Imperium focuses on the exercise of different types of power over "extended territories and diverse peoples" and offers more fine-grained analysis of how imperial practices differed across different regions within the same

[79] Ronald Grigor Suny, "Studying Empires," *Ab Imperio* no. 1 (2008): 205–213. 208-9.
[80] Seymour Becker, "Russia and the Concept of Empire," *Ab Imperio* no. 3–4 (2000): 329–342. 333.
[81] Suny, "Studying Empires." 209.
[82] Becker, "Russia and the Concept of Empire." 333.

empire, a frequent characteristic of both the Tsarist Empire and other empires.[83] Semyonov alternatively offers the idea of empire as a "context-setting category," which further complicates the historical treatment of heterogeneous empires. Heterogeneity is undoubtedly a central feature of such systems, but Semyonov also marks that the heterogeneity manifests itself in uneven or unpredictable ways, creating a "multidimensional" heterogeneity. He captures this in reference to the history of the State Duma which was divided not only along political fault lines (Monarchists, Democrats, Socialists of various stripes, etc), but also along regional, ethnic, and confessional fault lines, many of which had overlaps.[84] Combining this observation with the observation that nation-states also possessed some "imperial" elements concerning internal heterogeneity complicates not only the historiography of imperial political systems, but also their treatment within sociological or political science studies. In this way, capturing the transformation of imperial systems from "gamekeeper" systems to "gardener" systems should also reflect the unevenness of imperial practice.

By emphasizing the blurriness of the continuum between nation-state and empire, it is also profitable to consider the Tsarist Empire in conjunction with standard examples of national states such as France and Britain. As Becker notes, there has been a tendency to contrast the "Asiatic" experience of Russia with the "European" process of state-building, but this dichotomy becomes problematic when taking into account the early modern experience of France and Britain.[85] During this earlier period, France and Britain correspond more closely with the experience of the Tsarist Empire, as budding states

[83] Breyfogle, "Enduring Imperium: Russia/Soviet Union/Eurasia as Multiethnic, Multiconfessional Space." 78.
[84] Alexander Semyonov, "Empire as a Context-Setting Category," *Ab Imperio* no. 1 (2008): 193–203. 201-2.
[85] Becker, "Russia and the Concept of Empire." 335.

sought to deal with internal heterogeneity and administrative centralization, a process that was not necessarily successfully complete even by the late modern era. This is part of the reason why 19th century Russian publicists like Mikhail Katkov invoked the assimilatory experiences of France and Britain as justification for vigorous Russification in the Tsarist Empire. However, as Becker also notes, the Tsarist experience diverged for a number of reasons, including territorial extensivity and larger cultural divisions, but also due to the issue of timing: it is impossible to ignore the fact that Russification occurred in a time period defined largely by the "zeitgeist" of nationalism, with this context heavily coloring Tsarist government relations with internal groups.[86] Stephen Velychenko's comparison of the experience of Scots in the British Empire and Ukrainians in the Tsarist Empire is therefore instructive. Both groups played a significant role in supporting imperial efforts after their incorporation, but the Scots' desire for home rule was acknowledged as legitimate while Ukrainians' desire for autonomy were ignored or seen as pernicious.[87] Thus, Becker's conclusion appears apt: in the 19th century the Tsarist government continued its long-term policy of further incorporating the periphery into the core, but the path chosen by previous states like France and Britain was no longer available to heterogeneous, dynastic systems in the age of nationalism.[88] By these terms, the Tsarist effort to transform itself from a gamekeeper into a gardener was preconfigured to fail. A failure that obviously came to pass in the opening decades of the 20th century.

Even though this failure did occur, it remains worthwhile to consider imperial practices in the context of multidimensional heterogeneity, if only for the fact that such

[86] Ibid. 336.
[87] Stephen Velychenko, "Nationalizing and Denationalizing the Past: Ukraine and Russia in Comparative Context," *Ab Imperio* no. 1 (2007): 477–494. 490.
[88] Becker, "Russia and the Concept of Empire." 341.

heterogeneity continued to play an important role in both the Soviet Union and now the Russian Federation (though truncated). These practices have often been underemphasized or omitted in favor of more unified national histories (or political studies, where state-centric bias is also present), which as Theodore Weeks reminds us is due largely to the mundane reason that national histories are easier to define while regional histories are often blurry and encounter overlap between different territories (the different yet similar experiences of the Western Borderlands is a good case in point here).[89] Accounts of multidimensional heterogeneity in imperial states also run into the problem that definitions of the state are often colored by Weberian notions of uniform, bureaucratic penetration of territory linked together by a standard medium of communication (a state language). As John Armstrong points out, in the Tsarist Empire the need of a bureaucratic apparatus preceded the creation of a standardized civil service elite, leading the empire to draw from the available expertise of non-Russian groups and thereby reinforce rather than erode differences.[90] The result of this was a patchwork of governance where different regions were ruled by different government ministries (or by themselves to a large extent, as with the Baltics and Finland), with governors-general presiding in some areas, the military in others, and state agencies like the Ministry of Interior in yet others.[91] Little surprise, then, that the Duma factions ended up reproducing this dizzying array of regional, ethnic, and confessional difference. And the problem was by no means resolved in the Soviet period, despite the promise to create "Soviet Man," with the creation of

[89] Theodore R. Weeks, "The Challenges of Writing a Multi-national History of the Russian Empire," *Ab Imperio* no. 4 (2008): 365–372. 366.
[90] John A. Armstrong, "Administrative Elites in Multiethnic Polities," *International Political Science Review / Revue Internationale de Science Politique* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 1980): 107–128. 108.
[91] Breyfogle, "Enduring Imperium: Russia/Soviet Union/Eurasia as Multiethnic, Multiconfessional Space." 103.

ethnofederalism and policies of *korenizatsiya* (though not always followed in practice) to deal with the "problem" of heterogeneity.[92] Tsarist methods of dealing with multidimensional heterogeneity may have eventually failed, but understanding how they worked and did not work can help to shed light on the experiences of contemporary heterogeneous states. The transformation from gamekeeper state to gardener state is still a transformation that many states attempt, even if they do not bear the trappings of traditional imperial systems.

When applied to the case of the Western Borderlands of the Tsarist Empire, the empire literature can help to explain why the treatment of the regions differed over time and what role the local elites played in these policy differences. The provision of extensive economic and political privileges to the local elites of the borderlands, in return for their political loyalty and service, fits with the expectation that a territorially-extensive empire lacks the infrastructural power necessary for direct rule and therefore requires effective local clients. However, a cooperative relationship with local elites also requires that the goals of those elites are broadly compatible with the institutional matrix of the empire itself. In a political system premised on absolute political subservience to the Tsar and a land-based political economy, the service of the Baltic Germans and the Finnish elites meshed more with Tsarist interests insofar as they sought to preserve a conservative political order that did not directly challenge Tsarist suzerainty. This fact is in part demonstrated by Tsarist efforts to impose land reform on the Baltic Germans rather than the Baltic Germans attempting to outpace the political development of the imperial core. In contrast, the Polish *szlachta* and Ukrainian starshyna explicitly or implicitly challenged the primacy of the Tsarist political system as it attempted to

[92] Ibid. 113.

progress down the road of state-building. The *szlachta*, by emphasizing a history of political rights more in consonance with Western European tradition, threatened the ideological syntax of the Tsarist system. The starshyna, by representing a Ukrainian state that sought an autonomous existence from Tsarism, required absorption to keep the project of the Tsarist state intact. These threats were only redoubled in the 19th century as the Tsarist state shifted to the goal of nation-building, as Polishness and Ukrainianess were increasingly viewed as undermining the unity of the state. By comparison, the Baltics and Finland were relatively protected after this shift, as they were not seen as threatening to the reimagined empire. This eventually changed in the last decade of the 19th century, but only after Russification policies had finally erased the old basis of imperial stability.

Direct and Indirect Rule

The literature on state and empire provide a structural and geopolitical context for understanding the process of incorporation in the borderlands and the general trajectory of increasing centralization. The "imperial turn" in historiography likewise contributes an important sensitivity to the multidimensionality of imperial governance and the fallacy of treating imperial units as monolithic. However, where does that leave us with regard to the theoretical contribution of detailing the patterns of governance in the Tsarist Empire? In this case, recent social science literature on the distinction between direct and indirect rule offers the most compelling theoretical leverage for explaining the variations in Tsarist rule in the Western Borderlands. The most important recent study that attempts to come up with a systematic explanation for variations in direct and indirect rule is the

2011 article by Gerring, Ziblatt, et al. which proposes an "institutional" theory of direct and indirect rule.[93] Gerring, Ziblatt, et al. base their theory off a detailed consideration of theoretical and historiographical sources in disciplines ranging from political science to sociology to history to anthropology. The primary case used to test the theory is the British Empire,[94] but they also include consideration of a diverse range of other cases including the Incan Empire,[95] contemporary federal states,[96] and other empires, both maritime and contiguous. In addition to the cases employed, the authors also examine theoretical frameworks that emphasize the different dimensions of decentralization (fiscal, administrative, and political),[97] the process of organizational bypass that accompanies the shift from indirect to direct rule,[98] and alternative models that dispense with the traditional direct/indirect distinction and instead employ a firm-type model of rule.[99]

The product of this research is a complex yet parsimonious theory of direct and indirect rule that places the level of political institutionalization in subordinate units as the most important variable. Specifically, the authors argue that in subordinate units with more 'statelike' institutional structures, dominant units will opt for indirect rule, while

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[93] John Gerring et al., "An Institutional Theory of Direct and Indirect Rule," *World Politics* 63, no. 03 (2011): 377–433.
[94] D. A. Low, *Fabrication of Empire: The British and the Uganda Kingdoms, 1890-1902* (Cambridge, UK□; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); C. W. Newbury, *Patrons, Clients, and Empire: Chieftaincy and Over-rule in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific* (Oxford□; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); P. J. Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empires: Britain, India, and America C.1750-1783* (Oxford□; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
[95] R. Alan Covey, *How the Incas Built Their Heartland: State Formation and the Innovation of Imperial Strategies in the Sacred Valley, Peru*, History, Languages, and Cultures of the Spanish and Portuguese Worlds (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006).
[96] Ziblatt, *Structuring the State*.
[97] Aaron Schneider, "Decentralization: Conceptualization and Measurement," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 38, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 32–56.
[98] Lars-Erik Cederman and Luc Girardin, "Growing Sovereignty: Modeling the Shift from Indirect to Direct Rule," *International Studies Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (March 2010): 27–48.
[99] Alexander Cooley, *Logics of Hierarchy: The Organization of Empires, States, and Military Occupations* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2005).

direct rule is employed in subordinate units that lack these statelike structures.[100] The reason for the recourse to indirect rule is threefold: first, indirect rule can enhance the "principal-agency" relationship between the two units; second, it can solve the problem of political order since local elites would already have the apparatus in place for political rule; and finally, it is often in the interests of the elites in the subordinate unit to cooperate, since the alternative of direct rule is unappealing.[101] For the rulers of the dominant unit, the benefits of indirect rule greatly outweigh the costs of imposing direct rule. So long as the elites of the subordinate unit can reliably deliver on promises of governance, indirect rule is "less expensive, more predictable, and less fraught with complications."[102] Local elites are highly unlikely to resist the dominant unit, as this type of negotiation generally occurs in a context of high power asymmetry, where there is little question that the dominant unit will emerge victorious from any military confrontation. The imperative for local elites then becomes preserving as many of their privileges as possible during the negotiation process.[103] A natural corollary to this dynamic is that violent coercion is more likely to be employed against subordinate units that lack adequate institutionalization because the dominant authorities will need to impose administrative structures and deal with any local groups that are displaced by direct rule.[104]

The authors also offer some important caveats to their theoretical model. The most important caveat is that this theory is meant to be *general*, but not *exclusive*. What this means is that prior level of institutionalization will be the most important variable *all*

[100] Gerring et al., "An Institutional Theory of Direct and Indirect Rule." 380.
[101] Ibid. 382.
[102] Ibid. 385.
[103] Ibid. 386-7.
[104] Ibid. 414.

else being equal, and that other intervening factors that affected imperial practices may need to be taken into consideration to explain specific cases.[105] Therefore, their theory is capable of generating broad generalizations across a range of cases, but heightened accuracy when explaining specific cases means treating the theory as a starting point. Another important limitation to their theory is the capacity of rulers to make "mistakes" with respect to policy paths that do not "maximize their own objectives."[106] A primary "mistake" that may be made is that the dominant elites may opt to destroy an institutionalized subordinate unit despite the fact that they would incur greater costs through that approach, as with the example of the British destruction of the Ashanti Confederation. This kind of mistake is a classic problem with theoretical models that assume a certain degree of rationality on the part of political actors, and is usually attributed to a lack of information necessary to be able to accurately assess costs and benefits. As I will suggest below, another important cause of these kinds of mistakes are ideological systems that only poorly take into account rational maximization and guide leadership choices in the dominant units.

Despite these limitations, Gerring, Ziblatt, et al.'s theory provides a powerful analytical tool for understanding the choice between direct and indirect rule. Their theory has also been fruitfully amended and extended to account for other cases, demonstrating its flexibility. Naseemullah and Staniland offer the most substantial addition to the theory, arguing that instead of relying of the basic dichotomy of direct and indirect rule, we should investigate the different varieties of each type of rule. They use post-colonial India and South Asia as their primary case to delineate the varieties of indirect rule,

[105] Ibid. 404.
[106] Ibid. 388.

arguing that many of the same dynamics that could be observed in imperial systems also obtain in contemporary polities.[107] They offer a tripartite model of indirect rule, with the different types being *suzerain* rule, *hybrid* rule, and *de jure* rule. Suzerain rule refers to the type of rule where subordinate units retain their nominal independence while still being expected to maintain allegiance to the dominant power, a common arrangement in pre-modern imperial systems.[108] Hybrid rule refers to a situation where the dominant power explicitly shares governing authority with the subordinate unit, and usually retains coercive forces in the unit to enforce its writ.[109] Finally, de jure rule is where the dominant power formally possesses authority over the subordinate unit in a manner that would correspond to direct rule, but in actual practice local intermediaries are the ones responsible for governance and coercion.[110] Hariri also begins from premises derived from Gerring, Ziblatt, et al. in an attempt to explain the effect that indirect rule had on subsequent regime trajectories.[111] He finds that indirect rule did not contribute to a democratic regime trajectory because of the lack of institutional and ideational diffusion and the reinforcement of autocratic indigenous political structures.[112] Siroky, et al. extend the model further by applying it to the contemporary North Caucasus to try and understand how local demand for indirect rule influences governance patterns in heterogeneous polities.[113] They find that the middle classes tend to demand indirect rule and adopt nationalist positions, echoing Miroslav Hroch's classic study on the emergence

[107] Adnan Naseemullah and Paul Staniland, "Varieties of Indirect Rule: Explaining Governance Beyond Weberian Sovereignty," Unpublished Manuscript (University of Chicago, 2013). 5.
[108] Ibid. 7.
[109] Ibid. 8.
[110] Ibid. 9.
[111] Jacob Gerner Hariri, "The Autocratic Legacy of Early Statehood," *The American Political Science Review* 106, no. 3 (August 1, 2012): 471–494. 473.
[112] Ibid. 475.
[113] David S. Siroky, Valeriy Dzutsev, and Michael Hechter, "The Differential Demand for Indirect Rule: Evidence from the North Caucasus," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 29, no. 3 (2013): 268–286. 269.

of nationalism, and that growing cultural differences can also contribute to increasing demand for indirect rule.[114]

How well does Gerring, Ziblatt, et al.'s theoretical model explain the case of the Western Borderlands? Going strictly by degree of prior political institutionalization, Poland-Lithuania was the most 'statelike' unit, the Baltics and Finland were both moderately 'statelike', and Hetman Ukraine was the least 'statelike'. Thus, the expected degree of indirect rule should have been highest in Poland-Lithuania and lowest in Hetman Ukraine, with the Baltics and Finland falling somewhere between those two poles (likely closer to Poland-Lithuania, given their well-articulated institutions). In contrast to these expectations, however, Poland-Lithuania was governed directly after 1830 and with the highest degree of coercive violence of all the borderland territories. The other territories conform to the theoretical model, as the Baltics and Finland were relatively successful in preserving political and cultural autonomy, while Hetman Ukraine was eventually absorbed into the imperial apparatus. Although Poland-Lithuania enjoyed periods of relative autonomy (primarily the 1815-1830 Congress Kingdom experiment), this autonomy is overshadowed by the more coercive methods employed during the partitions of the late 18th century and the repressions following the 1830-1 and 1863-4 rebellions. And the deviation is not strictly due to the presence of insurrection provoking Tsarist authorities, as the Tsar and the Tsarist state did not observe the terms of autonomy formalized in the 1815 constitution. Accounting for the deviation of this highly significant case is imperative.

What I find throughout the case chapters is that Poland-Lithuania differed from the expected outcome due to the character of the local elites and the hostility of central

[114] Ibid. 280.

elites to the idea of an autonomous Polish Kingdom. Specifically, I find three intervening variables played a significant role in the Polish-Lithuanian case while also serving to explain the other borderland territories.

- *The strength and cohesion of the local elites*: Gerring, Ziblatt, et al.'s theory hinges on the expectation that local elites would be naturally cooperative in the face of a much stronger, dominant force. While this is likely true in most cases, the ability of the local elites to act as reliable clients depends on their ability to deliver social stability and political rule, which is likewise dependent on the absence of significant divisions among the local elites. Although the Polish szlachta were the most numerous borderland elite group, and although they undoubtedly commanded great economic power, they lacked the internal cohesion necessary to stable rule. Conversely, the Ukrainian starshyna possessed the requisite cohesion but lacked adequate strength to resist absorption into the Russian dvorianstvo. In both the Baltics and Finland, local elites were both strong and cohesive and subsequently able to deliver on central demands.
- *The orientation of the local elites*: An adjunct to the strength and cohesion of local elites is their general receptivity to negotiation and cooperation with central rule. Gerring, Ziblatt, et al. correctly note that local elites often derive benefits from cooperative relationships with central rulers, usually through the preservation of political and economic privileges. In cases like the Baltics, where the dominant elites were Germans presiding over non-German populations, cooperation is an overwhelming imperative. However, the Polish-Lithuanian case indicates the

possibility that local elites may not choose cooperation even if it seems to be the most practical option. The reasons behind Polish-Lithuanian rejection of Tsarist rule may not be generalizable, but the sheer fact of that rejection is not such an oddity in the history of center-periphery relations.

- *Leadership choice in the dominant unit*: Finally, it is necessary to take into consideration the disposition of central elites, especially in autocratic systems where relatively few individuals may be responsible for the broad outlines of state policy. Treating leadership choice as a serious variable does not mean psychologizing the internal thought processes of leaders, but it does mean treating official ideology and actual policy seriously as part of a general trend. This factor is especially salient in the Tsarist case, as there are clear oscillations in state policy across the different reigns with clear implications for borderland policy. An emphasis on leadership choice also helps to explain the deviant Polish-Lithuanian case, as Tsars like Nicholas I (and Tsarist elites more generally) were extraordinarily hostile to Polish autonomy, a hostility that would only deepen over the course of the 19th century. Conversely, Nicholas I and Alexander II *defended* the privileges of the Baltic Germans and Finnish elites, due largely to their history as loyal servitors of imperial rule.

A crucial test of this theoretical contribution is the degree to which it can explain the cases used by Gerring, Ziblatt, et al. The Incan case provided by Covey does indicate the importance of institutionalization, but his emphasis on the importance of marriage contracts to bind local elites to the empire also indicates the importance of the orientation

of the local elites.[115] Like other imperial units, the Incas gradually encroached on local institutions as the empire's rule became consolidated, but the persistence of indirect rule in some areas may indicate the role of local elites effectively resisting direct rule. Interestingly, Covey's analysis also indicates that there may be a threshold to institutionalization as a variable, as the Incas used indirect rule in "complex nonstate polities," but if local institutions were too developed the empire tended to opt for direct rule to undercut local authority.[116] This dynamic could demonstrate another theoretical limitation in Gerring, Ziblatt, et al.'s model, or it may simply demonstrate the role of leadership choice in formulating imperial strategy.

While the Incan case is fascinating, the primary case used by Gerring, Ziblatt, et al. is that of the British Empire in its diverse colonial domains. The British Empire is often used as the model example of indirect rule (with the French being the standard alternative for direct rule), and Gerring, Ziblatt et al. make a strong case that the variation observed within the empire can be explained by their variable of stateness. However, as the sources they use demonstrate, there was also a robust role for local elite agency in the process of imperial rule that should not be minimized. As Newbury argues, the practice of 'indirect rule' in the British Empire served to mask the various ways that indirect rule was actually managed through local clients, ranging from cases where existing chiefs were co-opted versus others where they had to be 'invented' before they could be used as an instrument of rule. Moreover, in some cases clients had their positions strengthened by imperial rule while in others they became 'mere agents of local government'. In yet others, imperial administrators ruled more in the vein of direct rule than anything

[115] Covey, *How the Incas Built Their Heartland*. 15-16, 164-6.
[116] Ibid. 187-9.

approximating indirect rule.[117] British imperial rule in India, alongside the purported use of 'indirect rule,' masks much the same multidimensionality that the imperial turn in Russian historiography has identified. The Indian subcontinent possessed hundreds of states and statelets and imperial rule varied significantly among them, as the British had to contend with a wide range of clients and brokers who were not always cooperative in the pursuit of imperial rule. In addition, rule-making in India reflected an equally complex set of conditions and demands, and led to different practices of rule from territory to territory.[118]

Much the same dynamic accompanied British rule in other parts of the empire. Low's study of British rule in Southern Uganda demonstrates that while institutionalization played a central role in strategies of rule, there was also a process of contestation between imperial agents and Ugandan elites that does not neatly conform to the expected cooperation of local elites. British imperial rule followed one of three models: supersession of existing institutions, hegemonic dominance over existing institutions, or the construction of institutions in 'stateless' societies. The pattern followed in the case of Southern Uganda was the second one.[119] The sheer fact of that hegemony did not necessarily prevent recalcitrance or resistance on the part of Ugandan elites, making the process of rule more of an ongoing negotiation where the outcome was never really fixed. Likewise, Marshall makes a similar argument in his innovative comparison of British rule in India and in the thirteen American colonies during the same time periods of the 18th century. Marshall argues that the fate of imperial governance in the British Empire hinged largely on the response of local elites, in this case comparing the

[117] Newbury, *Patrons, Clients, and Empire*. 14-5.
[118] Ibid. 47-55.
[119] Low, *Fabrication of Empire*. 22-3.

outcomes of empire in America and in India. Local elites in the thirteen colonies were less amenable to upholding British rule than the elites in India during the mid-to-late 18th century, and these differing responses fundamentally altered the options available for imperial rule.[120] This brief survey does not exhaustively cover all the cases considered by Gerring, Ziblatt, et al., but I do think that it illustrates that my theoretical contribution has merit and could be applied to a range of cases, even as institutionalization remains the putative starting point of analysis.

Finally, my contribution adds an important element that is mostly missing from Gerring, Ziblatt, et al.'s model. By focusing solely on institutionalization as the variable that explains the patterns of direct and indirect rule, their analysis acquires a deterministic feel. This assessment is partly rooted in their admitted limitations of the model, which does not preclude the interposition of other variables of the sort that I propose here. Nevertheless, by leaving the role of agency at the level of "mistakes" made in the calculations of central rulers, the analysis glosses over the important principal-agent interactions that are essential to the process of negotiation between dominant and subordinate units. The variables I add seek to address this deficiency, by taking into explicit consideration how local elites are oriented towards the dominant unit, and how central rulers make choices between different policy paths. I suspect that based on how this approach explains the Tsarist case and the cases presented by Gerring, Ziblatt, et al. that it could be employed to account for a broad range of cases. The consideration of future potential applications, however, will be left to the discussion in the conclusion of this study.

[120] Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empires*. 2-3.

Structure of the Study

The presentation of my argument is structured both thematically and chronologically. It begins with a consideration of changes within core Russia from the 17th-19th centuries, to help provide context for the policies in the borderlands. These changes span from Peter I's state-building efforts up through the Great Reforms of Alexander II and detail the Tsarist state's efforts to respond to the external military and economic pressures coming from Europe. Beginning with core Russia is essential because it provides perspective on the goal of the Tsarist leadership to construct a "well-ordered police state" in response to administrative challenges. The chapters concerning the borderlands indicate how unrealistic this vision of a well-ordered police state was in the periphery of the empire. The process of incorporating the borderlands between the 17th and 19th centuries, detailed in the third chapter, illustrates the necessity of offering substantial concessions to borderland elites in return for loyalty and service. Incorporation occurred in a context of geopolitical rivalry, forcing the state to offer better terms to the regions than its rivals, while also limiting the availability of repression as an option to induce compliance. As a result, all of the Western borderlands were granted a degree of political autonomy alongside substantial economic and cultural autonomy. The fourth chapter, on the local elites in the borderlands, help to explain what leverage the regions had vis-a-vis the state, and how this leverage was translated into imperial influence. The local elites provided the Tsarist state with a preexisting stock of potential servitors who could reinforce Tsarist rule in the borderlands. The relative strength and coherence of the local elites (in the form of institutional structures that served their interests) helped to determine the degree of Tsarist concessions and their protection from future encroachment, while the disposition

of the elites (their willingness to be loyal to the state) helped dictate whether the Tsarist state opted for more direct rule.

The fifth chapter, the shift to greater centralization in imperial government, indicates the point at which considerations of state-building began to intrude upon traditional modes of imperial governance. Peter I represents the logical starting point to the discussion of increasing centralization, though the military revolution was already underway in Russia prior to his reign. However, Peter's record on state-building was mixed, as it demonstrated a tension between traditional rule and the logic of the modern state. Although he attempted to redesign much of Tsarist administration and quash Ukrainian autonomy under the pressure of external war with Sweden, he also reinforced traditional modes of rule by extending concessions of autonomy to the Baltic provinces to ensure their loyalty (as they had previously been part of Sweden's territory). After Peter, later efforts at state-building replicated this tension, with the scales increasingly shifting in favor of state-building and against decentralized imperial rule. The periods of increasing centralization demonstrate most clearly the importance of local elites to the patterns of imperial governance, as some of the Western Borderlands were affected far more than other.

The sixth chapter, concerning efforts of cultural Russification in the mid to late 19th century, represents the conclusion of this movement towards the logic of the modern state. If the traditional imperial state was premised on de facto regional decentralization alongside a nominally centralized autocratic state, the modern state and its emphasis on constructing a nation militated against this logic of cultural and economic autonomy. The move towards a Great Russian nationalism that become more and more incorporated into

official policy in the 1860s and 1870s appears strategically unwise in the context of a multinational empire where fewer than half the subjects were ethnic Russians, but it was also an attempt to reconstruct the basis of loyalty after the disastrous defeat in the Crimean War. The Tsarist state's relatively weak hold on its territory and the resulting deficiency in resource extraction was shown to be wanting in the face of military challenge from more cohesive national states, and the decay of the manorial system and serfdom necessitated changes in imperial social structure. By abolishing serfdom, Alexander II removed the traditional basis of loyalty (gentry privilege and fixed populations for taxation) and attempted to move towards a system where the state derived support from the population as a whole. Subsequent Tsars only reinforced this commitment to Great Russian nationalism, with concomitant pressures placed on the borderlands due to their privileges. However, even during this period when traditional imperial rule was increasingly abandoned, some borderland territories defended their position more effectively than others, leading to large variations in the degree of direct rule, with the Baltics and Finland surviving without significant intrusion until the 1890s. Even after such intrusion happened, it was half-hearted due to the state's desire to retain the service of loyal servitors such as the Baltic Germans, who remained broadly loyal to the state up through World War I.

CHAPTER II

BUILDING A "BEAUTIFUL AUTOCRACY"

The 19th century was a period of wrenching social, economic, and political change in the Russian empire. The century started with great hopes of reform after the short but tumultuous reign of Paul I, but it ended with the state engaged in a series of ill-advised Russification measures to try and hold the disintegrating Empire together. These efforts failed, but they indicate the dramatic evolution of how the state sought to deal with the problem of internal cohesion, concerning not only the traditional Russian core, but also non-Russian borderlands. This evolution was premised on changes that had occurred in the 18th century, when Peter I and Catherine II had tried to direct Russia into the European mainstream. Peter strived to do this by reconstituting the institutional framework of the empire, while Catherine was more interested in establishing a public invested in the future of the state. The logic of these reforms was to transform Russia into a "well-ordered police state" that could manage the transition into modernity.

The idea of the "well-ordered police state" was something that emerged during the 16th-17th centuries in Europe, as the power of the Church (the Roman Catholic Church) receded and was gradually replaced with expanding secular authority.[121] A similar process was delayed in Russia until the time of Peter I, who then sought to transplant what he considered to be some of the more successful administrative accomplishments, notably from rival Sweden and Prussia. The concept of the well-ordered police state was based on the idea that the expansion and formalization of

[121] Marc Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change Through Law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

bureaucratic administration was an effective means to achieve the end of improving public order. This involved reconstructing public life around law, with a professionalized governing class tasked with the maintenance and direction of the polity. The idea that both state and society could be "perfected" by rational government action was a hallmark of this process.[122]

This was the goal that was assumed by both the absolutist monarchies, and eventually, the republican governments of the time period following the French Revolution. A natural outgrowth of this project to shape public life was the use of police ordinances to change the "customs, ideas, and activities" of the average person. This was a logical conclusion of the intrusion of the well-ordered state into the private sphere to guarantee a productive society.[123] It required firm bureaucratic structures, the predictable extraction of tax revenue from a compliant populace, and active policing agencies to ensure that deviations from the public order were not permitted. The efficacy of these measures, though eventually contributing to the discontent that roiled Europe during the 19th century, was ensured by states that were relatively strong and capable of implementing such measures through the use of resources and manpower alike. As would be expected, Peter's attempt to 'copy' such designs into a country where the state administration was comparatively weak and where the material and social conditions were different ran into serious problems that were never quite resolved by his successors.

This chapter explores the different strategies that the Tsarist administration employed to construct a well-ordered state comparable to the states of Western and Central Europe. This exploration is important because it indicates the policy preferences

[122] Ibid. 21-3.
[123] Ibid. 41-2.

of the ruling elites and the way these preferences were translated into policies and institutions during the 18th and 19th centuries. These preferences broadly conform with the state-building and centralizing techniques discussed in the literature on state-building, especially Tilly's discussion of coercion-intensive trajectories of state-building.[124] These evolving policy preferences also help to explain the general trajectory of centralization over time, even if this trajectory was inconsistent based on the preferences of individual Tsars. Given adequate state capacity, it is reasonable to assume that the Tsarist state would have extended many of the same policies to the imperial periphery, and the oscillations of centralization in the core do in fact generally correspond to similar efforts in the periphery. As a result, any discussion of the policies employed in the Western Borderlands must be considered in light of the policies employed in the imperial core.

Constructing the Petrine State

The empire that Peter inherited was one that was in dire need of reform. Militarily and economically, it lagged behind other European powers, most notably its rival, Sweden. Politically, the weakness of the state and the position of the boyar gentry undermined the efforts of the Tsar to administrate the far-flung territories of the empire. The disastrous defeat at Narva in 1700 merely reinforced the perception that there was a problem, and Peter used the respite provided after the battle to overhaul the Russian military, and construct a new capital at St. Petersburg (at great loss of human life). After emerging victorious against Sweden in the Battle of Poltava in 1709, Peter turned his efforts to reconstructing the rest of the state, so that it would become a more durable edifice to face

[124] Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*; Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*; Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan*. Among others.

future challenges. Included among these efforts were reforms aimed at changing the culture of Russians (restrictions against having beards, reorganization of the patriarchate into the state-controlled Holy Synod), compulsory service and education for the higher classes (mainly in the form of scientific and technological training to further buttress the war machine), changes to taxation, and new judicial regulations and policing agencies, among others. Not all of these are directly relevant for our current consideration, but in sum total, the goal of Peter's institutional reforms was a highly centralized state. And although some of the superficial forms did not persist after his death (due to weak or beholden rulers), the basic direction of his reforms remained constant, and were eventually 'completed' in a sense by the reign of Catherine II.[125]

Newer methods of policing and punishment were some of the innovations that Peter tried to introduce to the Russian state, though even these hearkened back to older Tsarist practices. The *tainyi prikaz*, founded by Tsar Aleksei (Peter's father), was one of the predecessors of the Third Section, and was modeled partly on Ivan IV's *oprichnina*. It was an informal part of the Tsar's private chancery, a model that Peter I mimicked when designing the *Preobrazhensky prikaz*. This was a political police of growing power, involved in espionage, interrogation, and general control over crimes of *slovo y delo* (word and deed).[126] The Preobrazhenskii prikaz were one of the first attempts to establish a political police in the newly reconstituted state, as Peter concluded that relying on denunciations could not possibly address all political 'offences'. The prikaz's duties were ambiguously defined, which in effect enhanced its powers vis-à-vis other government

[125] Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State*. 200-1.
[126] Sidney Monas, *The Third Section; Police and Society in Russia Under Nicholas I*, Russian Research Center Studies 42 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1961).

bodies (something that would similarly be the trademark for future policing agencies), and its funding and manpower increased in each year of its existence.[127]

Alongside these changes to political policing, there was also the intention to set up a justice system in Russia that was modeled on the Swedish court systems, but these efforts were inconsistent and undermined by Peter's unwillingness to accept a full separation of powers. These judicial reforms, enacted in 1719 and reconfirmed in 1722, included a full array of provincial and aulic courts, overseen by a Senate tasked with the administration of justice, yet as Kutscheroff notes, these courts did not possess full judicial independence because a *voevody* (military governor) sat on them, and the Senate was also beholden to Peter.[128] In any case, the court system did not survive Peter, as it was the victim of the reaction against the reform that set in after his death, with aulic courts abolished in decrees in 1727, and remaining judicial functions delegated to the sole discretion of *voevody* and governors.[129] The punitive mechanisms remained (although in changing form as tsars reconstituted the political police on a regular basis), but mechanisms for justice intended to oversee those punitive measures were abandoned. Pipes explains that this was due to the fact that Russia lacked a legal tradition like that which was present in the West, relying on governance through Tsarist ukases, unwritten laws, and customs. There was little distinction between different types of laws until the reforms of the 1860s, and there was little provision for the average person to be protected

[127] Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime* (London: Penguin Books, 1974).
[128] Samuel Kutscheroff, "Administration of Justice Under Nicholas I of Russia," *American Slavic and East European Review* 7, no. 2 (April 1, 1948): 125–138.
[129] Ibid.

by laws. Laws were treated as something used by those in power to administrate and control, not as statutes that they themselves needed to conform to.[130]

Peter's reforms, unlike the German and Swedish ordinances, did not rely on collusion with elite strata to achieve their ends, but rather created an oppositional cast, with the state's interests counterpoised against a resentful and noncompliant population. As a result, the implementation of Peter's reforms required a high degree of coercion, and established a precedent for state predominance and repression. As Raeff puts it,

> Repression and compulsion were the only means available to the bureaucracy, and to a much greater degree than was the case in the West it had no overall control or direction, for there were no constituted bodies to limit its capricious tyranny or to make its abuses known to higher institutions. The vastness of territory, poor communications, and the technical backwardness and illiteracy of the empire's subjects only served to compound the difficulties.[131]

Alongside efforts towards modernization, older forms of punishment persisted, so that even after the death penalty was abolished to make progress towards a more enlightened, well-governed political system, punishment by the knout was a stark reminder of lingering brutality (a brutality that the gentry was not excluded from until Catherine II's charter to the nobility, incidentally). As Schrader notes, up until the 19th century, "serious" crimes were punished by a severe knouting and banishment, with male convicts having their faces branded and their nostrils ripped out. Afterwards, the prisoners were placed in hospitals until they either recovered or died from their wounds, and if the former, they were exiled to Siberia for penal servitude.[132]

Pipes argues that the central tragedy of Russian history is that Peter sought to motivate the populace to work in the public interest, but without ceding any control over

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[130] Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*. 288-9.
[131] Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State*. 217-218.
[132] Abby M. Schrader, "Containing the Spectacle of Punishment: The Russian Autocracy and the Abolition of the Knout, 1817-1845," *Slavic Review* 56, no. 4 (December 1, 1997): 613–644. 614-5.

public affairs to the population as a whole. This disjunction can be considered the root of the dissatisfaction of the broad populace in the efficacy of the state.[133] This dissatisfaction was broader in scope than just the lower classes as well, who indeed were justified in viewing the state with resentment since changes introduced by Peter helped to deepen the condition of serfdom (the shift from a household tax to the capitation, or head tax, was the leading culprit). The gentry also occupied an uneasy position vis-à-vis the Tsar and his government, as the changes wrought by Peter simultaneously buttressed their economic position and undermined their political position. This perverse social contract robbed Russia of a corporate nobility able to act as a counterbalancing force to the interests of the Tsar, making Russian development in the 18th and 19th centuries dramatically different from its counterparts in the rest of Europe.

The Evolution of the Gentry

The Russian gentry of the 18th and 19th centuries, the *dvorianstvo*, were a social caste that enjoyed significant economic concessions at the same time as they lacked a coherent form of political power. This is not to say that the gentry was entirely sapped of political influence, as when their interests were threatened, they were able to take concerted action even against the Tsar, as evidenced by the coups and intrigues of the 18th century up until the murder of Paul I. Yet, despite these moments of political action, the Russian gentry was weak and disorganized when compared against their European counterparts, who were able to exercise considerable political authority vis-à-vis the crown. John Le Donne notes that the reason for this state of affairs can be traced back to the 17th century when

[133] Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*. 129.

the gentry gave their support to the Romanov line, partly so they could secure their economic interests, in this case their domination over the serf subject population. The *Ulozhenie* of 1649 formalized this compact, producing a situation where the Tsar was given a relatively free hand in central administration while the gentry retained absolute predominance over their social inferiors.[134] This was not in fact all that different from the arrangement that prevailed in Prussia after 1653, with the difference being the Prussian nobles being far more powerful than their Russian counterparts.

There are a number of reasons for the discrepancy between the power of the Russian gentry versus the power of other European nobilities. In the material realm, the first reason has to do with the nature of gentry landholdings and wealth. Unlike other European nobles, who accumulated impressive *latifundia* and translated that landed wealth into political power, the landholdings of the Russian gentry were relatively dispersed and prone to fragmentation. The way in which land was granted to gentry, *pomestia*, is the source of this difference. The granting of *pomestia* to loyal servitors took the strange form of granting multiple blocs of land dramatically separate from one another to the same member of the gentry, thus guaranteeing that the gentry's power base was diffused throughout the country, rather than having the powerful traditional large landed estates of other European nobilities. These scattered holdings (along with the lack of profit due to lack of organization) were compounded by a lack of entail or primogeniture, which combined with the growth of the *dvorianin* as a class guaranteed the eventual destitution of the vast majority of the gentry. Thus, we have the archetypal image of the Rostovs in *War and Peace* as the representation of the lot of the average

[134] John P. LeDonne, "The Eighteenth-Century Russian Nobility: Bureaucracy or Ruling Class?," *Cahiers Du Monde Russe Et Soviétique* 34, no. 1/2 (June 1993): 139–147. 144.

gentry family in the 19th century, something that only became catastrophically worse after the emancipation of the 1860s.[135]

The practice of *pomestia* and other economic concessions made to the gentry strengthened the class in the short-term, but made it vulnerable to disruption, which is exactly what happened with the introduction of the Petrine reforms. Peter's interest in breaking the influence of the gentry led to the introduction of the Table of Ranks, which reoriented status away from powerful families and towards those who were willing to serve the state.[136] In a political system where the gentry already had a precedent of abasement before the Tsar (the practice of referring to gentry as *kholopy*, or slaves, reinforced this hierarchy), the shocks of Peter's reforms weakened and essentially destroyed corporate forms of gentry life, since the gentry was now entirely dependent on the state for their position, and tasked with carrying out the duties of the state.[137] This situation only worsened over the course of the 18th century, as the Table of Ranks opened the gentry up to previously excluded members of other classes, swelling the ranks of the *dvorianstvo* and increasing the relative poverty of the class, while foreign nobles from newly acquired territories (such as the Polish *szlachta*) had a similar effect.[138] Finally, the gentry voluntarily worsened their own position, as international revolutionary patterns, economic and social tensions, and lower class uprisings like those of Pugachev made the upper classes in Russia more willing to buttress and further concentrate the autocratic powers of the imperial government.[139] Although this contributed to the creation of the

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[135] Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*. 174, 176-7.
[136] Geoffrey A Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997). 154.
[137] Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State*. 186-7.
[138] Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*. 180-3.
[139] A. E Presni□akov, *Emperor Nicholas I of Russia, the Apogee of Autocracy, 1825-1855* (Gulf Breeze, Fla.: Academic International Press, 1974). 2-3.

"imperial dynasty," as Presniakov termed it, it also had the ironic effect of weakening the state itself, since it made it more difficult for the state to effectively penetrate and govern the countryside.[140] The economic concessions made by the state to the gentry so that the gentry would support the central power actually served to undermine the vigor of that same central authority.

Toward the End of the 18th Century

After Peter's death in 1725, Russia went through a succession of rulers that failed to leave much of an impact on Russian political life, at least compared to the achievements of Peter, and later, Catherine II. These reigns are important studies in Russian court politics and the influence of the so-called 'German party,' but outside of the fairly lengthy reign of Elizabeth I (1741-1762), they are of little relevance to this project. Elizabeth's changes did have an important effect on Russian history, in that she started to introduce Western arts and culture to Russia (patronizing the polymath Mikhail Lomonosov, for one), and she also softened some of the requirements for gentry service to the Petrine state (shortening the duration of service and giving them more power in local government). Yet, despite these few areas, the period spanning from 1725 to 1762 represents a regression from the efforts of Peter, a problem that would only be addressed anew once Catherine came to power. As Geoffrey Hosking notes when discussing the Russian state during this time period:

> It would be wrong, however, to overestimate the effectiveness of Russian state authority in the mid-eighteenth century. In most respects the 'state' (to use what may be too pretentious a word) was still like a rickety framework in a howling gale, subject to all the chance cross-

[140] Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*. 114-5.

> winds of court intrigue and kinship feuding. It was a mere skeleton whose flesh and sinews consisted of the clannish interests of the great families who provided its continuity and its motive power. As for local government, it was notional only, feeble to the point of being non-existent: for lack of suitable personnel to staff its offices, it lapsed back into the hands of the arbitrary and venal military governors from whom Peter had tried to rescue it.[141]

This basic lack of state capacity was a problem that persisted into the 19th century, which made the wrenching changes of that century even more difficult to manage. There were only between 11-13 civil servants per 10000 people in the 19th century, which was 3-4 times below the comparable amount in other European states. The amount spent on bureaucratic administration also lagged considerably behind other countries, so much so that tiny Livonia spent more on administration than Russia did for her entire empire (at the time when Livonia was absorbed into the empire)![142]

Catherine, upon gaining power in 1762 after the coup directed against her husband, Peter III, placed her on the throne, sought to address these problems in a couple ways. First, she tried to make government administration a reality in the empire as a whole, and not simply Moscow and Petersburg. And second, she tried to address the gulf that had opened up between the autocracy and the people it ruled (at least the educated) by patronizing a public press to open up a more responsive public sphere. Some of the changes, such as the Statute of the Provinces issued in 1775 and the Charter to the Towns issued in 1785, were intended to extend central administrative power into the country as a whole and reorganize local government. Only with Catherine's statute of the provinces did the Petrine state begin to penetrate into local administration in a consistent way, and even then it was certainly not omnipotent. Governor's boards and departments were

[141] Hosking, *Russia*. 96.
[142] Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*. 281-2.

established in *guberniia* and *uezdy*, but these still enjoyed a great deal of local autonomy from central control.[143] However, other changes produced cross-pressures against this direction, as the Charter to the Nobility issued in 1785 helped to shore up gentry support of Catherine at the cost of undermining state authority. The charter removed the requirement for state service and granted the gentry even further economic and political prerogatives in administering their estates. This also had the effect of deepening the institution of serfdom, which would prove to be the central political problem of the 19th century.

Beyond institutional changes, Catherine also attempted to instill some Western cultural and ideological currents into Russian life, and it is during her reign that Russia really began to develop a public sphere. Famously, she corresponded with Voltaire and espoused Enlightenment ideals even in government documents, such as her "Instruction," even if these ideals did not always translate into political practice. Progress was made in creating a more educated public, however, as Catherine implemented a Statute on National Education in 1786, and she actively patronized the publicist and Freemason Nikolai Novikov, who published several journals which featured satire and social commentary. Catherine herself established the first satirical journal, "Odds and Ends," and personally contributed articles written in her hand. The outbreak of the French revolution soured Catherine to this kind of publicity however, and the criticism offered by individuals like Alexander Radishchev in his *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* ended the experiment in openness, as Novikov and Radishchev became some of the first

[143] Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State*. 227-8.

intelligentsia exiled by the Russian state, a practice that became common during the subsequent century.[144]

The Era of Alexander

The beginning of the 19th century and of Alexander I's rule as the Russian Tsar was met by a great deal of enthusiasm among the Russian public. The last years of Catherine II's reign and the short reign of Paul I were largely defined by reaction and repression, but the reformist mien of Alexander I inspired hope for the future of Russia. As Raeff puts it, the first decade of the 19th century thus became a period of "great intellectual ferment, of exhilarating optimism about Russia's prospects for 'modernization'" and "offered greater freedom, [and] more opportunities for the expression of ideas and hopes."[145] This optimism ended up being disappointed, as Alexander was never the principled liberal that many hoped he would be, and he easily fell under the sway of those uninterested in radically altering Russia's political landscape. Alexander was a mercurial personality, guilty to some degree for complicity in the death of his father, and forever entertaining notions of abandoning public life and living a rural existence, he flitted between flirtations with reform and influence from the more conservative members of the government.[146]

During the early part of his reign, when reformist aspirations were at their pinnacle, Alexander relied on the counsel of Mikhail Speransky and Nikolai Novosiltsev, reformers who were both part of his 'Unofficial Committee." This was during the point

[144] Hosking, *Russia*. 168.
[145] Marc Raeff, "Filling the Gap Between Radishchev and the Decembrists," *Slavic Review* 26, no. 3 (1967): 395–413. 395.
[146] Hosking, *Russia*. 122-3.

when Alexander was still actively considered granting Russia a constitution, and both Speransky and Novosiltsev produced written constitutions (among others that were also produced during Alexander's reformist stage). However, Alexander never definitively acted on their advice, and Speransky fell out of favor in 1812, due not only to domestic political reasons, but also to shore up support during the crucial stage of war against Napoleonic France. The fall of Speransky presaged the ultimate failure of reform, and gave the Decembrists yet more ammunition to conclude that the government itself would not pursue meaningful changes.[147] The fall of Speransky also guaranteed the end of the constitutional projects, the last of which (Novosiltsev's) was shelved even though it was a fundamentally conservative document (not all that different from the document produced by Nikolai Muraviev of the Northern Society).[148]

After the reformist spirit waned in Alexander's government, the latter half of his reign produced an ideology of reaction that served as a comprehensible bridge to the rule of his brother, Nicholas. After the end of reformism, the government of Alexander entered full-fledged reaction, which based itself on a quasi-mystical, backward-looking view of the world. Educational institutions were closely monitored by the obscurantist Mikhail Magnitsky, and censorship was tightened to snuff out the remaining support for reform.[149] Additional signs of unrest both at home and abroad (with the international revolutionary movement) convinced Alexander that further precautions needed to be taken. The revolt in the Semenovsky regiment in 1820, prompted by the brutal rule of Colonel Schwartz, prompted Alexander to expand the functions of the political police,

[147] Anatole Gregory Mazour, *The First Russian Revolution, 1825; the Decembrist Movement, Its Origins, Development, and Significance* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1961). 26-27.
[148] Ibid. 28.
[149] Ibid. 30-37.

thinking that the revolt was an augury of a larger political plot.[150] Furthermore, Alexander, fearing the growth of Masonry and its connections to revolutionary or liberal thought, banned all Masonic lodges in 1822, driving those who wanted to continue their work underground. This is despite the fact that Alexander himself patronized Masonic lodges in the early years of his reign; with many of his early government personnel (including Speransky) being Masons themselves.[151] The military colonies of Alexander Arakcheev were another visible facet of the later years of Alexander. The colonies were intended to help the government blunt the financial demands of the empire by setting up self-sufficient military colonies during peacetime, reducing the costs of keeping troops. The cruel discipline enforced by Arakcheev in these colonies made them a hated symbol of the state, and became one of the most potent recruitment sources for the Decembrist rebellion in 1825.[152]

Despite this period of reaction, it would be incorrect to conclude that Alexander developed a consistent approach to dealing with actual or potential political dissent. This becomes especially clear when one considers that the Decembrist rebellion could develop mostly unimpeded during his reign, and not due to a lack of detection. As P.S. Squire noted, political policing during Alexander's reign proved to be inadequate in preventing the development of a major conspiracy mainly due to Alexander himself. Alexander never conferred full policing powers on any single organization, and these conflicting lines of authority made for a confused and ineffectual maintenance of public order. Moreover, Alexander proved to be unwilling to take action against political opponents

[150] Monas, *The Third Section; Police and Society in Russia Under Nicholas I*. 45-47.
[151] Mazour, *The First Russian Revolution, 1825; the Decembrist Movement, Its Origins, Development, and Significance*. 50-51.
[152] Ibid. 41-45.

such as the Decembrists, even though he was informed about their existence well ahead of the events of 1825.[153] Early in his reign Alexander demonstrated an interest in reorganizing the political police, convening multiple committees to address the problem between 1801 and 1807. These efforts were successful in form in 1810-1811 with the introduction of the Ministry of Police, but in practice Alexander did not trust those who he put in charge and constantly undermined their work (up to and including spying on the police chief himself).[154] Alexander preferred to trust such things to close advisors, such as Arakcheev and the Military Governor of Petersburg, Count Miladorovich, and after the abolition of the Ministry of Police, the remainder of Alexander's reign lacked even a nominal central impulse for internal policing.[155] When Alexander died unexpectedly in November 1825, this disorder and dissatisfaction with the reactionary tendencies of his latter years made for a political situation ripe for conflict.

The Decembrist Revolt

One of the consequences of the reactionary period of Alexander's rule was the emergence of the Decembrist conspiracy, until the 20th century the largest elite revolt against the established order. The Decembrists, separated into the moderate Northern Society and the more radical Southern Society, sought social and political reform of the type that had been hoped for at the beginning of Alexander's reign, and indeed attempted to work in concert with the state during the years it was organized as the Union of Salvation.[156] The

[153] P. S. Squire, "Nicholas I and the Problem of Internal Security in Russia in 1826," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 38, no. 91 (June 1, 1960): 431–458. 431.
[154] Ibid. 433-434.
[155] Ibid. 438-9.
[156] Nicholas Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). 320.

Union of Salvation and the Union of Welfare (after 1817) were organized along a Masonic model, emphasizing civic engagement and camaraderie. After political activism in Masonry became frowned upon and eventually banned, the political functions were reorganized in secret in the newly-established Union of Welfare.[157] The direct causes for the turn towards revolutionary activity are many. The standard account has it that the Decembrists, after coming into contact with Western Europe during the Napoleonic campaigns, felt that their country had fallen behind politically and culturally, and only Western political forms could help Russia catch up. This seems a romantic embellishment, as it is far more likely that internal developments in Russia convinced the Decembrists, many of whom were members of the guard regiments and the minor gentry, that working within the existing political order was impossible. In particular, the advent of Arakcheev's military colonies and the vigorous repression of the Semenovsky regiment served as a potent mobilizing tool for the organization.

Politically, nearly every member of the Decembrists opposed serfdom, despite many being landholders. They wanted reforms similar to the Borderland emancipations to occur in Russia, and were severely disappointed when they did not manifest.[158] The fact that Poland was granted a fairly liberal constitution by the Tsar after the Congress of Vienna was also a bitter sticking point, even if the Tsar proved unwilling to fully abide by the letter and spirit of the 1815 Constitution. Yet, as Anatole Mazour notes, the grievances contained within the Decembrist rebellion predated the era of Alexander:

> The line of demarcation between Old and New Russia was clearly drawn in the reign of Catherine II, and, strangely enough, indirectly with her assistance. Beginning her reign with ambitious projects for reform, she inspired the hope that the situation might be remedied by

[157] Hosking, *Russia*. 173-5.
[158] Mazour, *The First Russian Revolution, 1825; the Decembrist Movement, Its Origins, Development, and Significance*. 7.

> the government. The Legislative Assembly soon proved the inefficacy of this noble gesture, and the further enslavement of the peasants convinced many of the futility of expecting relief from above. The breach between the government and the masses widened, or, in the words of one of the Decembrists, the throne and the people drew apart.[159]

The Decembrist's solution to this breach was not uniform; the Northern Society favored a constitutional monarchy that was not unlike Novosiltsev's constitution, and the Southern Society, headed by the far more radical Pavel Pestel, favored a Jacobin-style republic. It is interesting to note that Pestel's scheme for designing the political police in *Russian Justice*, his manifesto, is actually reminiscent of some of the measures taken after the rebellion failed, and could even be seen as a predecessor for Soviet-era practices.[160]

The rebellion itself was a disastrous failure. After Alexander died abruptly in Taganrog in November 1825, it was decided that the organization would undertake its revolt to exploit the confused interregnum, as neither Grand Duke Constantine nor Nicholas moved to assume the throne. However, Pestel was arrested a couple days before the planned insurrection, leaving the Southern Society leaderless, and the Northern Society proceeded in its own revolt in a haphazard way, largely due to a lack of leadership and indecision. An attempt was made to provoke mutiny among regiments in Petersburg, and those who joined assembled in Senate Square, but took no other action outside shouting slogans. Nicholas, seeking to regain control over the situation, had loyal forces that far outnumbered the confused rebels, and his primary consideration seems to have been avoiding bloodshed on his first day as Tsar, since the outcome of any conflict between the two forces was not in doubt. Eventually, after officials sent to negotiate with

[159] Ibid. 261.
[160] Monas, *The Third Section; Police and Society in Russia Under Nicholas I*. 56.

the rebels were shot at or assassinated (including Governor Miladorovich), Nicholas decided to bring the standoff to an end by force. After the decision was made to disperse the revolt with cannons, the loyalist soldiers became indiscriminate in their use of force, especially down narrow side streets, and killed many spectators of the events while pursuing hapless Decembrists.[161] The Southern Society followed with their own rebellion, which showed a great deal more heroism and sense than the Northern Society, but given the disparity in forces, the outcome was inevitable.

More interesting than the desultory rebellion was the government's, and specifically the Tsar's, approach to questioning and meting out punishment to the conspirators. Nicholas personally interrogated many of the jailed Decembrists, and decided upon what kinds of punishments would be inflicted on them. According to Mazour, the emperor used all forms of manipulation to extract confessions from the prisoners, in some cases acting the friend, and in others, the ruthless monarch.[162] Presniakov offers a similar account, but also provides the important observation that much of Nicholas' approach to governance was affected by his initial experiences in dealing with the Decembrist rebellion. In particular, Nicholas had the tendency to obsess about the Decembrists and interpret all sedition during his reign as sprouting from the Decembrist example, or as he called them, *mes amis de quatorze*.[163] This perception should not be underestimated, as it provides an important way to understand Nicholas' approach to dealing with political dissent and his quest to construct a state authority that would not be prey to such conspiracies in the future. It can also help us understand the

[161] Mazour, *The First Russian Revolution, 1825; the Decembrist Movement, Its Origins, Development, and Significance*. 178-9.
[162] Ibid. 204-5.
[163] Presni□akov, *Emperor Nicholas I of Russia, the Apogee of Autocracy, 1825-1855*. 15.

intense manner in which the state pursued different interrogation techniques, including midnight interrogations, sleep deprivation, bright lights, and promises of pardon in return for confession.[164] The fact that the Russian state had proven to be incapable of stopping such a large-scale conspiracy, however disorganized, convinced Nicholas that the softer methods of his brother needed to be replaced with iron constancy and an organized police apparatus, a major motivation for the foundation of the Third Section.

The verdicts rendered in the case of the Decembrists were generally viewed as harsh by politically-aware Russians. Five Decembrists were ordered to be hanged (Miladorovich's assassin Kahkovsky, Pestel, Kondraty Ryleyev, Sergey Muravyov-Apostol, and Mikhail Betuzhev-Ryumin), 31 were sent to Siberia, and the rest were sentenced to various terms of labor or imprisonment. According to Mazour, verdicts were fairly arbitrary, with those deeply implicated being let off surprisingly lightly, while some who were barely connected to the revolt were confined to cruel conditions for 20 plus years.[165] Monas shares this assessment about the arbitrariness of the sentences.[166] While in Siberia, exiled Decembrists experienced a range of treatment, spanning from being kept chained 24 hours a day, to becoming a part of the local community as a teacher or quasi-government official.[167] Most Decembrists who ended up being placed in settlements in Siberia had to bear 'wretched' conditions, including drafty domiciles, barely any means to sustain themselves, and constant supervision. Eventually, some were given 15 desiatin of land to provide for themselves, despite none of them being

[164] Mazour, *The First Russian Revolution, 1825; the Decembrist Movement, Its Origins, Development, and Significance*. 209.
[165] Ibid. 213-7.
[166] Monas, *The Third Section; Police and Society in Russia Under Nicholas I*. 74-5.
[167] Ibid. 77-9.

farmers.[168] One of the stranger circumstances that emerged from the fallout of the rebellion was a young man connected to the Decembrists was actually given a post in the Russian embassy in London, and dined almost every day with Nicholas Turgenev, one of the foremost Decembrists and condemned to death in absentia.[169] The disparities in treatment and the fact that many Decembrists (and Decembrist wives) continued to have influence from Siberia indicates that the Russian state was not yet a well-oiled police state, a problem that Nicholas attempted to address throughout his reign.

The foundation of the Third Section (the political police during Nicholas' reign) and the ideology of official nationality are two important consequences of the rebellion that will be addressed in-depth below. Yet Nicholas did not consider the control provided by these assets to be adequate to stem future Decembrist rebellions, so he took the step of taking the Decembrists grievances seriously. Nicholas ordered that all opinions about the internal affairs of Russia made by the Decembrists should be sent to the Commission of Inquiry headed by Aleksandr Borovkov, who was then to prepare a report. Borovkov concluded that it was necessary for "clear, positive laws" to be established to ensure justice, a step that Nicholas accomplished in 1833 when the Second Section (headed by Speransky, incidentally) published a complete collection of Russian laws.[170] Yet, the laws codified in this project were very different from those sought by the Decembrists, and although Nicholas established multiple committees to address the serfdom issue, none of them were successful. Instead, the body of laws does not differ much from the police ordinances of other well-ordered police states, insofar as they specified political and

[168] Mazour, *The First Russian Revolution, 1825; the Decembrist Movement, Its Origins, Development, and Significance*. 231-7.
[169] Monas, *The Third Section; Police and Society in Russia Under Nicholas I*. 82.
[170] Kutscheroff, "Administration of Justice Under Nicholas I of Russia." 133.

criminal codes, but did not provide laws binding on the authorities themselves. The reign of Nicholas, rather than being a sharp break with a more moderate Alexandrine past, was instead the culmination of the reaction begun in the last part of Alexander's reign. The Decembrists simply reinforced the will of the government to snuff out sedition once and for all.[171]

Nicholas' Reign to 1848

In the aftermath of the Decembrist rebellion, the new Tsar undertook multiple changes to the political order. The beginning of Nicholas' reign coincides with a period of remarkable transformation in Russian and broader European social systems. Russia's economy experienced an increase in commercial and industrial activity, more extensive trade relationships with the West, and the growth of parts of the populace looking towards more modern economic relationships. This was counterpoised against a declining profitability of manors and serfdom, and an imperial autocracy that strove to preserve the status quo.[172] In Pipes' judgment, the manifold changes made under Nicholas - the foundation of the Third Section, the censorship statutes, and the criminal code instituted in 1832 - were all ways of putting into effect a proto-police state.[173] Undergirding these practical changes was a new state ideology that Nicholas saw as necessary to combating the philosophy of revolution, an ideology that came to be called the 'Official Nationality.' Nicholas actually pursued changes to the status quo of serfdom, convoking numerous private committees to discuss the problem, but here he encountered the

[171] Mazour, *The First Russian Revolution, 1825; the Decembrist Movement, Its Origins, Development, and Significance*. 265.
[172] Presni□akov, *Emperor Nicholas I of Russia, the Apogee of Autocracy, 1825-1855*. 19-21.
[173] Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*. 291-3.

lingering difficulty of state-gentry relations. The gentry, despite their poor position, were unwilling to consider any change to social relations, and Nicholas abandoned his attempts to preserve the support of this important class.[174] Thus, the only major progressive aim of the state was abandoned, while the changes that buttressed the autocracy remained intact.

The Third Section

The most important development for Russian politics that came out of the Decembrist rebellion was the foundation of the Third Section, the section of the Tsar's chancery that was tasked with acting as a political police. In forming the Third Section, Nicholas was attempting to address the weakness of political policing as inherited from Alexander by constructing a centralized agency answerable to the Tsar. He placed at its head Alexander Benckendorff, a Baltic German who had acquitted himself well by trying to warn the Tsar about the Decembrist conspiracy, and who had suggested something similar as a way to address problems of sedition in the empire. As P.S. Squire notes:

> [Nicholas] endowed [the Third Section] with unprecedented authority by allotting to it its own staff officers and troops in the shape of a corp of gendarmes and by placing at its head the most privileged of his generals-in-waiting. The third department was to be ubiquitous and omnipotent. It was to possess moral as well as physical authority. Above all, Nicholas saw it as the essential link between himself and his people, observing all that went on, righting wrongs and averting evil. Such were the purposes which may be said to have led to its creation.[175]

The functions enumerated in the 1826 edict that established the Third Section bears out this judgment, as the Third Section was tasked with overseeing a wide range of political concerns, including the activities of foreigners, economic crimes such as fraud

[174] Presni□akov, *Emperor Nicholas I of Russia, the Apogee of Autocracy, 1825-1855*. 23-26.
[175] Squire, "Nicholas I and the Problem of Internal Security in Russia in 1826." 446.

and counterfeiting, surveillance of criminals, and information concerning "sects" or "schisms" within the state. The eighth function, "Reports about all occurrences without exception," established such vast parameters that it was inevitable that the Third Section would snake its way into multiple facets of Russian life.[176]

Also important to the operation of the Third Section was its effective independence from any kind of oversight aside from that of the Tsar himself. The reason Nicholas made the Third Section a part of his private chancery was to prevent it from developing a separate bureaucratic interest and independence, and the private chancery provided him the easiest means to maintain control over the gendarme.[177] Although Nicholas favored a strong and centralized state, he also loathed working through official channels, relying instead on ad hoc committees and sections of his personal chancery to conduct day to day governance. This ironically contributed to the undermining of state authority.[178] Nicholas believed that this state of affairs was justified since he considered the Third Section to be operating as his personal representatives, acting directly on his orders. To admit that such an arrangement was not possible smacked of constitutional restrictions on his authority, which would undermine the principle of autocracy, which was enshrined as the central principle of the state's new ideology.[179] In Presniakov's judgment, Nicholas, leery of the bureaucracy and those in state service, actually caused the state apparatus to deteriorate by vesting his personal chanceries with most of the practical power to administer and conduct oversight. His reliance on agencies like the

[176] Nicholas Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855*, Russian and East European Studies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959). 219-220; Presni□akov, *Emperor Nicholas I of Russia, the Apogee of Autocracy, 1825-1855*. 35-38.
[177] Monas, *The Third Section; Police and Society in Russia Under Nicholas I*. 18-21.
[178] Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*. 325.
[179] Squire, "Nicholas I and the Problem of Internal Security in Russia in 1826." 453.

Third Section over formal ministries like the interior ministry or education led to an informalization of government power, sapping the vigor of much of the autocracy.[180]

In actual practice, the Third Section oscillated between vigilance and absurdity, a fact noticed by most contemporaneous commentators. Benckendorff was more concerned with standing on ceremony and social niceties, and his greatest quality seems to have been that he assiduously carried out the orders of the Tsar. Thus, we get the image of the incredibly apologetic gendarme chief nevertheless sending men to exile or confinement, the affable, yet hapless figure of Herzen's depiction. It was actually Leonty Dubelt, Benckendorff's deputy, who was the operational brain of the Third Section. He managed all of the informants and took care of the most sensitive police work, while Benckendorff assumed the public face of the chancery.[181] The Marquis de Custine, who traveled throughout Russia in 1839 and penned a critical book of the autocracy, noted that the police took great care in questioning foreigners, and seizing suspicious articles (in Custine's case, these articles ended up being all of his books, his traveling pistols, and his travel clock).[182] After successfully entering the country, Custine concluded concerning the dire effects of policing, "[t]he Russian government is the discipline of the camp substituted for the civil order - it is a state of siege become the normal state of society."[183] Herzen, the famous Russian dissident, experienced the operation of the Third Section firsthand, and during the occasion of his first arrest noted the empty observance of formalities, such as the provision of an impartial witness (a citizen woken to stand at the

[180] Presni□akov, *Emperor Nicholas I of Russia, the Apogee of Autocracy, 1825-1855*. 42-3.
[181] Monas, *The Third Section; Police and Society in Russia Under Nicholas I*. 94-5, 106-108.
[182] Astolphe Custine, *Journey for Our Time; the Journals of the Marquis de Custine* (New York: Pellegrini & Cudahy, 1951). 69-71.
[183] Ibid, 81.

door of the arrestee, witnessing nothing), with little information being given to the arrestee.[184]

Yet, counterpoised against this menacing character of the Third Section as the guarantor of the autocracy is the farcical nature of much of the internal proceedings. Herzen relates this by displaying the naiveté of some of their methods of interrogation, with the accused being given a sheet of questions asking if they know of any secret societies or are a member of any secret societies (a continuing obsession in Russian policing, since Nicholas always assumed that a new society like the Decembrists would spring up again).[185] At the time of Herzen's second exile, he was punished for repeating a story that was being talked about all over Petersburg (his first exile was due to being present at a party where revolutionary songs were sung) concerning a common crime, since repeating such a 'rumor' indicated a desire to undermine public order.[186] While in exile, he served in a government office in Novgorod, where he was actually responsible for signing off on reports concerning his own police surveillance![187] He was only able to escape this bizarre system by securing a passport, which was granted to him after different parts of the government and Third Section displayed absolute confusion about his status (he was given leave to present himself in Petersburg, at which point he was summoned to be told to leave since he was not allowed in Petersburg).[188] Herzen's experience was not an exception, either, as Monas details the similar experiences of a man named Selivanov, who was likewise condemned to exile for the crime of being

[184] Alexander Herzen, *My Past and Thoughts* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982). 132-7.
[185] Ibid. 140.
[186] Ibid. 265-8.
[187] Ibid. 271.
[188] Ibid. 307-313.

associated to an event where political crimes may have been committed.[189] And, as Kutscheroff notes, the Third Section was often tasked with reducing the judicial caseload for local governments, which were resolved by arbitrarily going through the backlog of cases and adding "Reversed" or "Upheld" in an alternating pattern.[190]

Even if the actions of the Third Section sometimes bordered on the absurd, it would be inaccurate to conclude that the organization was ineffective or not a serious obstacle for Russians. Its vague powers conferred upon it the ability to conduct oversight on any part of the population that it saw fit. In 1836, a relatively quiet year, the Third Section kept 1631 people under police surveillance, with 1080 of them for political reasons.[191] Those caught up in this net had to face stark consequences should the agency decide that correction was needed, with the lower classes being subjected to the worst treatment, due to their tenuous position in Russian life. As Herzen notes, there was an extensive use of torture in lower class cases, generally used to extract confessions. This despite the fact that torture was supposedly proscribed under Russian law:

> Peter III abolished torture and the Secret Chamber.
> Catherine II abolished torture.
> Alexander I abolished it *again*.
> Answers given 'under intimidation' are not recognized by law. The official who tortures an accused man renders himself liable to trial and severe punishment.
> And yet, all over Russia, from the Bering Strait to Taurogen, men are tortured; where it is dangerous to torture by flogging, they are tortured by insufferable heat, thirst, and salted food…[192]

Although higher class criminals were generally exempt from these cruder efforts, their situations usually resulted in imprisonment, administrative exile, or hard labor, as Herzen's examples show. The offences that produced these sentences were often simple

[189] Monas, *The Third Section; Police and Society in Russia Under Nicholas I*. 124-9.
[190] Kutscheroff, "Administration of Justice Under Nicholas I of Russia." 137-8.
[191] Monas, *The Third Section; Police and Society in Russia Under Nicholas I*. 64.
[192] Herzen, *My Past and Thoughts*. 142-4.

cases of *lese majeste*, or a tawdry form of guilt by association, if a person's actions were viewed as suspicious enough to justify a social prophylactic.[193] The Third Section was also vested with the power to punish religious crimes, a carryover of the lasting effects of the Orthodox schism of the 17th century. Religious dissenters were categorized as either 'most pernicious,' 'pernicious,' or 'least pernicious' based on their degree of acceptance of the state, with those in the first category having their gathering places closed, internally exiled, or otherwise harassed by government officials.[194]

Censorship

Alongside the Third Section inoculating the public against 'dangerous' people, censorship policies developed during Nicholas' reign were designed to inoculate the public against 'dangerous' ideas. Until Alexander, preliminary censorship and state control of publishing precluded the development of an independent publishing public, but the freer regulations under his reign caused a remarkable growth in publishing. This only started winding down after 1817, when Alexander became more reactionary, and became most restrictive under Nicholas.[195] Initially, the function of censorship was not confined to a single body, as the Ministry of Education, the police, and the Third Section all shared some responsibility for overseeing publishing. After 1828, the Third Section was entrusted with theatrical censorship, and this role expanded after 1829, when the Third Section became a primary censor and also a check on all other censorship agencies. This in fact is what produced complaints about the endless layers of censorship. Even until this

[193] Ibid. 162-3.
[194] Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855*. 224.
[195] Monas, *The Third Section; Police and Society in Russia Under Nicholas I*. 135-7.

point, though, there was still some flexibility when it came to censorship, but this also tightened after 1830-1, when the Ministry of Education (which was considered more moderate) was neutered concerning censorship, and when Nicholas reaffirmed that the names of all "dangerous authors" should be handed over to the Third Section by other censorship agencies.[196] As Riasanovsky points out, this overlordship by the Third Section created incentives for individual censors to err on the side of caution and harshness, as if they were later judged to be negligent, the Tsar was not shy about punishing censors with confinement.[197]

As could be expected, this perverse incentive structure created a stifling environment for Russian letters, a fact bemoaned not only by writers, but also by some of the more public-minded censors. Overzealous censorship was what led the critic Belinsky to complain about receiving his articles from the censors “dripping” with red ink. But the alternative, articles slipping through without preliminary censorship, could in fact be worse. This occurred in the case of Pyotr Chaadaev, upon the publication of his first “Philosophical Letter” in the journal *Telescope* in 1836. Chaadaev’s letters had circulated in manuscript form for awhile due to the unlikelihood of them being accepted by the censor, but the surprising acceptance of his first letter caused a firestorm of controversy, as it was very harsh in its criticism of Russian culture. As a result, the editor of *Telescope* was exiled to the Far North, the journal was closed down, and Chaadaev was declared insane by the Tsarist authorities and confined.[198] Likewise, the effects of the censorship were seen as baleful for some censors as well, as the case of the censor Nikitenko

[196] Ibid. 146-151.
[197] Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855*. 221-3.
[198] Herzen, *My Past and Thoughts*. 294-5. Monas, *The Third Section; Police and Society in Russia Under Nicholas I*. 169-170.

demonstrates. Nikitenko was an academic who was a moderate disposed towards sympathizing with the plight of writers. His life demonstrates how tenuous the position of the censors were, if they cared about literature, as leniency on Nikitenko's part got him imprisoned by the Tsar on a couple different occasions. His career left him extremely bitter about the role of censorship in Russian letters.[199]

There were limitations to the powers of censorship, however, much as there were broader limitations on police capabilities. For one, intellectuals and writers developed ways to avoid incurring the wrath of the censors and the authorities. Controversial works were either circulated in manuscript form, or writers developed a coded writing style that conveyed political commentary in an indirect manner. The critic Belinsky did this by converting literary criticism into a form of social criticism, with judgments on the political order available to those capable of reading between the lines. Fiction also became a venue for politics, as Nicholas' reign coincided with the emergence of a robust literary tradition, featuring luminaries such as Pushkin, Gogol, and Lermontov. This tradition only deepened during the course of the 19th century, as major political disputes were played out on the pages of novels rather than in newspapers. Foreign and forbidden books also provided an outlet for those seeking alternative political ideas, as the authorities lacked the manpower and expertise to properly oversee the burgeoning book industry. Forbidden books were readily available in Russia, as booksellers stocked them and high class readers owned them in large numbers. Occasional efforts were made to seize stores of these books, but it was a futile effort, reinforced by the fact that booksellers had little way to determine if their stocks were illegal, as the state refused to allow the distribution of a banned book list for fear that sellers would actively seek out

[199] Monas, *The Third Section; Police and Society in Russia Under Nicholas I*. 173-183.

the books included.[200] Given these conditions, Richard Pipes' conclusion that draconian laws were less-than-strictly enforced due to the primitive machinery of repression seems a fair assessment.[201]

The Official Nationality

Alongside these institutional measures meant to protect the status quo was the creation of an official state ideology, termed the "Official Nationality." Developed in 1833 by Sergey Uvarov, the Minister of Education, the ideology was intended to combat political opposition in the realm of ideas, an area that was perceived as weak following the convulsions of the French Revolution. The traditional principles of the Petrine state, loyalty and service, were thus replaced by a triad of principles, Autocracy, Orthodoxy, and Nationality, which were intended to inspire the public and guide government action. One of the areas that the ideology had the greatest effect on was education, unsurprising given Uvarov's role in developing it, and logical given the dramatic expansion in education (especially university education) during the first half of the 19th century. Breaking a European tradition of university autonomy, Nicholas pursued strict oversight of education, through Uvarov and through rigorous personal inspections (Nicholas often engaged in personal inspections in multiple areas of governance, and tended to favor harsh punishments for transgressions). This can be seen as a continuation of the restrictive policies of the late period of Alexander's reign, though it became more restrictive, especially after 1848.[202] All three tenets of the Official Nationality became

[200] Ibid. 194-5.
[201] Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*. 295.
[202] Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*. 349-352.

increasingly problematic as the century progressed, as they worked against the grain of several trends in Russia's political and economic development and hearkened back to a more immobile type of political system. This would prove to be especially difficult in the Borderlands, as will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters.

The first tenet of the Official Nationality, autocracy, was by far the most important. As expressed by its ideologists, the doctrine of autocracy assumed an extremely pessimistic, Hobbesian view of human nature, with people being such foul creatures that firm and severe guidance was necessary for the stability and health of the body politic.[203] Nicholas was so concerned with preserving the autocracy and its ideology that he not only prevented constitutional views from surfacing, but he attempted to scrub the recent Russian past of constitutional schemes designed under his brother, such as Speransky's and Novosiltsev's.[204] However, the tenet of autocracy was little different than past justifications for the structure of Russian governance, and did little ideological work on its own. As such, it possessed relatively little in the way of substantive philosophical content and was instead used as a justification for measures of social prophylaxis taken against competing ideas of governance. The tenet of autocracy was also featured strongly in new educational curricula, as it was intended to combat liberal ideas in the domain where they had commonly been present.

Orthodoxy and nationality are both more complicated than the tenet of autocracy. Autocracy was something that was relevant to the shared experience of all citizens of the Russian empire, but substantial portions could not qualify as 'Orthodox,' and 'Nationality' largely depended on how it was defined. The doctrine of nationality

[203] Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855*. 99-100.
[204] Ibid. 186-7.

possesses a conflict at its heart, between what Riasanovsky calls the "dynastic" and the "nationalistic". The first emphasized the traditional loyalty to the state regardless of nationality, while the latter presaged a more chauvinistic portrayal of Russianness, which started the ripples that eventually became the Russification campaigns of the late century and the Pan-Slav movement.[205] The Baltic Germans epitomized this gulf, as the nationalistic side of the debate wanted to see their parasitic status diminished, while the dynastic side (which included the Tsar and most government ministers) believed that the position of the Baltics was satisfactory given their exemplary dedication to the state.[206] By the middle of the 19th century, and especially under Alexander III in the second half of the century, the tenet of Orthodoxy had become bound up with the tenet of Nationality, as Russification campaigns often incorporated conversions to the Russian Orthodox Church. This development obviously had an impact on the status of Borderland-Core relations, but that impact is beyond the purview of the current study.

1848-1855: The "Long Night"

Between 1848 and 1855, the use of repression deepened in Russia, mainly in response to the European revolutions of 1848, but also due to the domestic politics resulting from the onset of the Crimean War. As Pavel Annenkov noted upon returning to Russia in 1848, "[a]fter coming from Paris, in October 1848, the situation in Petersburg seems extraordinary: the government's fear of revolution, the terror within brought on by the fear itself, persecution of the press, the buildup of the police, the suspiciousness, the

[205] Ibid. 124.
[206] Ibid. 144-6.

repressive measures without need and without limit…"[207] This period of time came to be referred to as the "Long Night," and represented the height of Third Section activity and punishments that would have previously been unthinkable, even given the relative harshness of the first part of Nicholas' reign. Included among the new repressive measures was a blanket ban on Russians traveling abroad, a reduction in the number of university scholarships (as the universities were seen as hotbeds of sedition), a reduction in university autonomy and academic freedom, the removal of law and philosophy from educational curricula, surveillance of questionable professors and students, and nearly the closure of the universities themselves.[208] This period also marks the broadest interpretation of political crime used by the Third Section, and some of the agency's more questionable uses, including Nicholas persecuting a woman who had spurned him romantically.[209]

The most important single incident of repression coming out of this period was the so-called Petrashevsty Affair. Mikhail Butashevich-Petrashevsky was an intellectual and socialist who identified himself as a follower of the French philosopher Fourier (Petrashevsky actually tried to implement a Fourier-style phalanstery on his estate, but skeptical peasants burned it down), and after 1844-1845, he sponsored weekly gatherings in his apartment to discuss political and social conditions. As the literary historian Joseph Frank points out, Petrashevsky possessed some fairly radical ideas, but sought to pursue them in a cautious manner through education rather than revolution, although subgroups within the circle disagreed with this approach (notably the Palm-Durov group that Fyodor

[207] P.V. Annenkov, *The Extraordinary Decade* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1978). 239.
[208] Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855*. 218-9.
[209] Monas, *The Third Section; Police and Society in Russia Under Nicholas I*. 129-132.

Dostoevsky was a part of).[210] The punishment of the Petrashevsty, coming as it did after 1848, was on a scale not seen since the Decembrists, and much more extreme taking into account the mostly harmless nature of the group. Before 1848, Petrashevsky's discussion groups had been under surveillance, but had been dismissed as harmless, but this estimation changed after 1848 after the scare of the European revolutions.[211] Initially, after being arrested, most of the members of the Petrashevsky group assumed that they would receive relatively light sentences, as their transgressions were not all that serious. This was reinforced by the prisoners being treated relatively well by their captors, even if their imprisonment was uncomfortable and rather long while awaiting judgment.[212] What happened next was therefore a shock, as they were taken to Semenovsky Square in the snow, were sentenced to execution (though the Tsar had already commuted their sentences to hard labor in Siberia), and then went through the macabre theater of a faked execution, after which they were shackled and trundled off to exile.[213] As Pavel Annenkov notes, the public's reaction to the Petrashevsty affair was one of shock and anxiety, as unlike the sentencing of the Decembrists, no reasonable person seriously expected such a cruel punishment for individuals who were largely viewed as misguided youths.[214]

More perplexing than the punishment of the Petrashevsty was the repression of the Slavophiles, who had traditionally been viewed as more favorable to the state than other intellectual groups. The Slavophiles were essentially conservative, and emphasized

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[210] Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Seeds of Revolt, 1821-1849* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976). 284-5.
[211] Monas, *The Third Section; Police and Society in Russia Under Nicholas I*. 257-60.
[212] Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky, the Years of Ordeal, 1850-1859* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1983). 16-17.
[213] Ibid. 49-51.
[214] Annenkov, *The Extraordinary Decade*. 241-2.

a spiritual vision of Russia that drew on what they considered to be native traditions, while rejecting both socialism and capitalism (Aleksei Khomyakov, one of the most influential Slavophile thinkers, used the term *sobornost* to capture this idealized spiritual unity). However, after 1848, the Slavophiles joined other groups in being listed as an "antigovernment sect," with several being arrested while others were forced to engage in humiliating displays of patriotic devotion (Mikhail Pogodin was forced to compose a song lauding the Tsar, and had it 'corrected' on several occasions by the Third Section). Khomyakov, the brothers Kireevsky, and Ivan Aksakov were all placed under personal surveillance by the Tsar himself.[215] The Slavophiles' biggest sin seems to have been supporting a vision of Russia not entirely in lockstep with the state, despite their continued loyalty to that state. The Slavophiles, religious anarchists as Riasanovsky calls them, had a strange relationship with the state, as they supported autocracy and opposed Western forms, but also sought the emancipation of the serfs and different religious policies on the part of the state. In the state's eyes, this often turned them into oppositionists not all that different from the Westerners.[216] In the indiscriminate atmosphere prevailing between 1848 and 1855, this fact was intolerable.

Conclusion

Upon Nicholas' death in 1855, the empire was left in a state of severe weakness, due both to the effects of Nicholas' policies and due to the disastrous course of the Crimean War. Nicholas had been able to maintain a superficial calm during his reign due to the extensive use of repressive measures against enemies (real and imagined), but this had

[215] Ibid. 251-3.
[216] Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*. 363-4.

come at great cost. Monas judges that it was due to the harshness of Nicholas' reign that the population was polarized and the revolutionary intelligentsia emerged, poisoning the political atmosphere to the point where even Alexander II's great reforms of the early 1860's constitute a case of "too little, too late."[217] In this sense, the state-building enterprise of Nicholas (and by extension, of Peter) failed, as it could not rely solely on coercion and formal institutions to achieve the kind of order sought by European states; it also required vesting those institutions with meaningful power (something that Russian autocrats were loath to do) while depending on a loyal social base. The first requirement was undermined by the Tsar's tendency to rely on informal means of political control (through agencies like the Third Section or through his personal surveillance) due to mistrust of the bureaucracy (which produced a seriously understaffed bureaucracy lacking in material resources). The second requirement was never met due to the comparative weakness and disorganization of the Russian gentry, which could not provide a consistent check on the state's authority or act as a consistent partner.

Thus, the arc of state-building efforts in this period are inconsistent, but even given the limitations of the state constructed by Peter I, Catherine II, and Nicholas I, the general trend is still one of centralization. The rule of the Tsar was gradually supplemented by formalized government ministries, a system of civil service advancement, formal (if not always observed) law, and social control mechanisms such as a political police and censorship. Even if these institutions only imperfectly penetrated into the countryside, they nevertheless retained a strong grip over key population centers, chief among these being the dual capitals of Moscow and St. Petersburg. These processes conform to the expectations of the state-building literature, which assume that the

[217] Monas, *The Third Section; Police and Society in Russia Under Nicholas I*. 284.

geopolitical spur of military competition drives internal state-formation, and that the degree of central control deepens over time as the state becomes consolidated. However, the changes taking place in the core did not always translate to changes taking place in the periphery, as Tsarist rule had to engage in negotiation processes with local elites. As a result, many of the institutions that were present (and highly important) in the core, such as the political police and censorship agencies, were usually only nominally present in borderland territories and in general exercised little authority compared to their activities in the core. The next two chapters consider the process of incorporation and bargaining in-depth.

CHAPTER III

THE INCORPORATION OF THE WESTERN BORDERLANDS

The origins of the Tsarist Empire can be traced back to a consistent contact with non-Russian ethnic groups, whether in the form of relations with the Mongols during Moscow's vassalage to the Golden Horde or in the governance of regions not under the control of the Horde. During the period where Novgorod was the most important Russian city (12th-14th centuries) it was already a multiethnic state, with client societies, varieties of direct and indirect rule, and different approaches to territorial incorporation. This ended with the triumph of Muscovy, but the act of conquest conferred this same multiethnic character on Muscovy in embryo.[218] This character was deepened with the conquest and incorporation of mainly Islamic communities, most importantly with the conquest of the Khanate of Kazan, and it forced the authorities to come to terms with incorporating different kinds of communities into the empire. Local elites were co-opted where it was prudent, with others being more vigorously incorporated if their way of life was deemed too alien to allow easy integration. Groups were often excluded from Russian institutions like serfdom and only gradually integrated; with integration policies being drawn back should resistance become too fierce.[219] This approach to governance meshes well with Doyle's observation that reliance on local clients was often the easiest path (in terms of resources used) for empires to consolidate their territories. In order for this cooptation to work effectively, though, it needs to be followed with some degree of political institutionalization and integration, lest the imperial units become too easy to

[218] Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History* (Harlow, England: Pearson Education, 2001). 15.
[219] Hosking, *Russia*. 10-1.

pull off of the core.[220] This tension between the mode of incorporation and subsequent efforts at integration would become one of the persistent problems of the empire in the 19th century.

Incorporation generally proceeded with the removal of military governors after Russian rule was solidified and their replacement with administrative units modeled on the rest of the empire. The local elites were entrusted with these administrative forms, indicating at least some degree of confidence on the part of the autocracy in their reliability in enforcing Russian rule.[221] In the case of the Russian empire, the local elites also often ended up serving within the imperial bureaucracy, in some cases with distinction. As Roger Bartlett observes:

> Conciliation and integration of alien subject elites was a long-established strategy in the integrationist policies of Muscovite and imperial governments, whether dealing (for example) with the Tatars of the Volga or the Cossack starshina of Ukraine. The Baltic German nobility found its way rapidly and easily into the service structure of the Russian Empire; but it was also very successful in maintaining its own identity and independence, right up to 1920, and, too, in its influence as a model for eighteenth-century Russian rulers concerned to reshape the organization, functions and status of their service elite.[222]

During the period when the empire was expanding in the 16th-18th centuries, the overriding concern was dynastic loyalty, not ethnic loyalty. Loyalty to the empire was determined more by the strategic support of local elites than by any sort of essentialist ties that we have come to take for granted in the age of nationalism. These ties were simply not as important.[223] This expansion was intended as an extension of the territory of the empire, and pursued for reasons of prestige, economy, geopolitics, state-building,

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[220] Michael W Doyle, *Empires*, Cornell Studies in Comparative History (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1986). 74-5, 91.
[221] Burbank, et al, *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930*, Indiana-Michigan Series in Russian and East European Studies (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007). 94-5.
[222] Roger Bartlett, "The Russian Nobility and the Baltic German Nobility in the Eighteenth Century," *Cahiers Du Monde Russe et Soviétique* 34, no. 1/2 (June 1993): 233–243. 233.
[223] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*. 158-9.

and security. The actual maintenance of those territories gained differed based on what was viewed as necessary, whether that be vigorous top-down management, or hands-off autonomy.[224] In the words of Boris Nol'de, the empire approached these different problems according to its own "idiosyncratic logic, thus leaving 'little sense' of what was created by the imperial state."[225]

The incorporation of the Western Borderlands into the Tsarist Empire followed this idiosyncratic logic, but the process also serves to confirm the expectations of the literature on state and empire. The mode of incorporation was dictated by geopolitical pressures that are compatible with the role of military competition in driving the expansion of imperial territory and in buttressing the security capabilities of the state. In all cases, the Tsarist state pursued the goal of protecting the imperial heartland vis-a-vis external rivals, by accumulating buffer territories and by building working relationships with local elites.[226] The method of achieving this goal, offering generous packages of political and economic autonomy to entrenched local elites, accords well with Michael Mann's observation that territorially-extensive empires were not able to rely on direct rule in regions far from the imperial center due to the difficulties in projecting state power into those regions.[227] Some of these deficiencies of projecting state power would be addressed in the future (in some cases, not until the Soviet period), but at the time the most relevant considerations were the combination of geopolitical necessity and the state's incapacity to directly coerce lightly-held territories. The willingness of the local

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[224] Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1993). 23-5.
[225] In Gerasimov, et al, *Empire Speaks Out: Languages of Rationalization and Self-description in the Russian Empire*, Russian History and Culture v. 1 (Leiden□; Boston: Brill, 2009). 22.
[226] John P LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
[227] Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*.

elites, in most cases, to tolerate or even embrace Tsarist rule certainly abetted the process of imperial expansion, as it allowed the Tsarist state to keep the costs of rule low while still extracting clear security benefits.

Although the state pursued roughly the same strategy of cooptation in all the cases, it is still vital to note key differences in how incorporation proceeded in the different regions of the borderlands. As my subsequent sections will show, the disposition of the local elites led to important variations in Tsarist strategy, although nowhere near the level of variation that occurred later on during the process of administrative centralization and Russification. The strength and cohesion of the Baltic Germans and Finnish elites, in combination with their cooperative attitude towards the state, yielded an incorporation agreement similar to that of the Ukrainian Hetmanate but without the immediate revisions in favor of the Tsarist state. Likewise, Congress Poland received the most generous terms of incorporation in the 1815 constitution, but this was only after an earlier attempt to erase Poland without significant political concessions had failed. And even this generous grant was abrogated quickly, while the privileges granted by incorporation persisted in the Baltics and Finland. Tsarist involvement in Polish factional struggles in the 18th century and Tsarism's long-standing strategic rivalry with Poland-Lithuania prevented the kind of amity that came to prevail in the northern regions of the borderlands. In all four regions the Tsarist state generally observed the basic compact that Jerome Blum identifies as the foundation of Eastern European political systems, the preservation of gentry economic privileges.[228] But it is the grant, and preservation, of political privileges that is the most telling phenomenon in the Tsarist incorporation of the Western Borderlands. The stage of incorporation is also where we first see some

[228] Blum, *The End of the Old Order in Rural Europe*.

deviations from Gerring, Ziblatt, et al.'s model of direct and indirect rule, although these deviations only became more pronounced later.[229] Poland-Lithuania possessed the most developed political institutions, but only enjoyed a brief period of autonomy after an attempt had already been made at more direct rule. The legacy of the Polish partitions had important downstream consequences for Tsarist governance strategies in Poland-Lithuania.

The Incorporation of the Ukrainian Hetmanate

Of the regions being considered in this project, the area of Hetman Ukraine came under Tsarist dominance first and had been integrated into the administrative framework of the Tsarist Empire long before the other borderlands experienced extensive Russification. This can be partly attributed to a historical connection between the Muscovite state and the territory that came to be considered Ukraine, with the foundation of the Kievan Rus in the 9th century AD being seen as the initial birthplace of Russia until its separation from Muscovy under the pressure of Mongol invasion. However, it can also be attributed to contingency in that conflict between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (the Hetmanate's previous ruler) and what would become the Ukrainian Hetmanate in the mid-17th century gave Tsarist Russia a political opening to extend its control over the Hetmanate. The agreement that was reached between the Hetmanate and the Tsar proved to be an important model for how Russia would deal with its borderland areas, both in terms of the initial autonomy that was provided and how that autonomy evolved in response to events (largely in the form of the Tsarist government gradually encroaching

[229] Gerring et al., "An Institutional Theory of Direct and Indirect Rule."

on the autonomy). Tsarist assimilation of the Hetmanate also proved to be more successful than in the other borderland areas, though this did not mitigate the coercive nature of that assimilation. The perceived historical connection between the inhabitants of Muscovy and the Hetmanate did not cause the Tsar to relent in the use of force to obtain the objectives of the empire.

Unlike the other regions in the borderlands, Ukraine was not a cohesive political entity with well-defined institutions and elites. After the 1648 Cossack rebellion under Bogdan Khmelnitsky this began to change, but these changes were mostly confined to the area that I refer to as Hetman Ukraine, and which is often referred to as Left-Bank Ukraine. After 1648, Ukraine was roughly divided between Hetman Ukraine under Russian suzerainty, Right-Bank Ukraine under continuing Polish control, and Sloboda Ukraine under Russian control (a thinly populated area of the Russian frontier that was home to Cossack groups). In addition, parts of historical Ukraine also shifted to Austrian control after the Polish partitions in the 18th century, making for dramatically different terms of governance in the different parts of Ukraine. Hetman Ukraine is a natural choice for the focus of this study, as it came the closest to acting like a sovereign state with indigenous institutions and a ruling elite (the Cossack officers, the *starshyna*, from which the Hetman was selected). These institutions were certainly underdeveloped when compared to the Baltic German *Ritterschaften* or the institutions of the Polish *szlachta*, but they were nevertheless a force that the Tsarist government had to deal with in exercising control over Ukraine.

The incorporation of Hetman Ukraine into the Tsarist sphere of influence was an event of great geopolitical importance for the empire. From the 14th century onward, the

lands that comprise contemporary Ukraine were under the domination of more powerful neighbors, primarily Poland and Lithuania, but also the Mongols in the East. Nearly all of the territory that would become contemporary Ukraine was eventually absorbed into Poland-Lithuania, partly because of the appeal of noble power and prestige to the Ukrainian Ruthenian gentry.[230] The position of the Polish *szlachta* in comparison to the indigenous Ruthenian gentry made inclusion in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth extremely attractive for the Ruthenian gentry. The Ruthenian gentry were the largely Orthodox descendants of the boiars and gentry of the Kievan Rus, but the desire to secure their position led them to arrive at a modus vivendi with the Catholic Poles. Combined with the fact that these territories lacked well-articulated political institutions, the protections offered by a powerful state such as the Commonwealth promised greater stability in the face of other regional powers such as Muscovy and the Crimean Tatars. After absorption into Poland-Lithuania, these territories continued to be dominated by large landholdings and affluent towns operating under Madgeburg Law. However, new grants of land by and large went to Polish nobility, and the Ruthenian gentry eventually assimilated to be able to retain their economic and social privileges. During this time period, the peasantry's condition worsened as manorial estates were introduced to manage the grain trade.[231]

The material changes occurring in the lands that would become Ukraine during this time period, combined with the effective loss of the local elites (to be discussed in greater length in the subsequent chapter), acted as a catalyst for the creation of a new social class: the Cossacks. The Cossacks initially emerged as a condition of life in the

[230] Serhy Yekelchyk, *Ukraine: Birth of a Modern Nation* (Oxford□; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 23-5.
[231] Ibid. 25.

steppe-lands, acting as quasi-military groups that were capable of fending off raids into Ukrainian territory. Poland's political and economic ascendance in Ukraine contributed to the rapid growth of the Cossack group that would eventually form the core of the Hetmanate, the Zaporozhian Cossacks, since their ranks took in runaway peasants and others dissatisfied with Polish rule. The rise of the Cossacks posed both problems and opportunities for the Commonwealth. Given their military skills, Poland used the Cossacks as an irregular raiding force to strike out at Muscovy, the Ottoman Empire, and the Crimean Tatars.[232] This convenient proxy force saved the Commonwealth resources and manpower, but also proved to be difficult to control during peacetime, as Cossack ranks continued to swell and often directed their ire towards the Commonwealth itself. The history leading up to the Great Uprising of 1648 under Bohdan Khmelnitsky is littered with abortive Cossack uprisings and clashes with Commonwealth troops. Despite the regular uprisings, Cossack unrest directed towards Poland-Lithuania failed until the 1648 rising under Bohdan Khmelnitsky. The reasons that can be adduced for the failures relate to the abundance of ill-armed peasantry, the lack of organization among the Cossacks, and the spontaneous nature of the uprisings. The *szlachta*, regardless of their origin (either Polish or Lithuanian or Ruthenian), were able to quell the revolts (though often at a steep cost) and attempted to limit the Cossack registers, but the problem was never definitively dealt with.[233]

The history of the 1648 uprising, while fascinating, is beyond the bounds of this study. What is important is that when the Cossacks finally reached a level of organization capable of throwing off Polish rule under Bogdan Khmelnitsky and establishing the

[232] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*. 62-3.
[233] Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: a History*, 3rd ed (Toronto□; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2000). 118.

Hetmanate, this represented a significant geopolitical opportunity for the Russian Empire. Previously, Ukraine had acted as a buffer zone from which Poland launched raids into the territories of regional rivals, including Muscovy. However, the removal of the Hetmanate from Poland-Lithuania's sphere of influence offered the Tsarist Empire a chance to shift the regional balance of power in its favor. The Hetmanate, for its part, recognized the need for protection from a larger power, and there were only three relevant options in the region: Poland-Lithuania, Muscovy, and the Ottoman Empire. Muscovy became the natural choice for Khmelnitsky, who framed the binding together of Ukraine and Russia as a reunification of Orthodox communities. The end result of this determination was the Treaty of Pereiaslav of 1654, where the Hetmanate recognized the supremacy of the Tsar in return for the promise of military protection and autonomy. Pereiaslav represented to some degree a misunderstanding between the Cossacks and the Tsar. The Cossacks sought the confirmation of privileges similar to the practices of Poland-Lithuania, whereas the Tsar was unwilling to permanently commit to privileges even if he was willing to grant them at the moment (the fact that the Tsar refused to swear an oath concerning the agreement indicates the lack of reciprocity inherent in the agreement). This misunderstanding fueled several conflicts in the late 17th century, as the Hetmanate attempted to switch patrons, only to have Muscovy intervene. The end result was the partition of the territories between Poland-Lithuania and Muscovy.[234]

Religion played a significant role in the position of the Tsarist government with regard to the Hetmanate and its incorporation. As Paul Bushkovitch notes, Ukrainian religious writings entered Russia and influenced its views on Orthodoxy considerably in the 16th and 17th centuries, especially considering the 1596 Brest Union and the

[234] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*. 64-5.

subsequent conflicts between the Polish-Lithuanian state and Orthodox adherents.[235] The Cossacks and Khmelnitsky largely framed their opposition to the Commonwealth in religious terms and their demands on the Polish state in the period between 1648 and 1654 expanded to include the abolition of the Union and greater autonomy.[236] In this position they found a strong potential ally in Tsar Aleksei, who was interested in uniting the Orthodox world. After 1648, Mohyla's Collegium enjoyed increasing influence as well, and in the latter half of the 17th century Ukrainian religious texts spread throughout the Russian branch of the Church.[237] By the reign of Peter I, clergy from Kiev (and Lithuania) became increasingly prominent, changing the overall complexion of the empire's religious elite.[238] As such, confession acted as an important variable in the incorporation of Ukraine, alongside the broader geopolitical concerns (and opportunities) of the empire, in much the same way that religion was employed to support the acquisition of Kazan and other territories.

The terms of the Treaty were relatively favorable for the Hetmanate, as the Tsarist government made a number of commitments to the privileges and autonomy of the Hetmanate. The Treaty guaranteed that Hetman Ukraine would retain its laws and customs, be able to carry on foreign relations with some powers (the most important were to be controlled by Moscow, mainly regional rivals like Poland-Lithuania, Crimea and the Ottomans), and preserved the status and privileges of local elites, in some cases expanding them such as with the Cossack registers. Internal policy was deemed as

[235] Paul Bushkovitch, *Religion and Society in Russia: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). 53.
[236] Ibid. 58.
[237] Ibid. 135-149.
[238] Ibid. 163-179.

outside of Moscow's jurisdiction.[239] The autonomy offered by the original treaty was in keeping with Muscovy/Russia's general approach to dealing with the problem of incorporating non-Great Russian territories into the administrative fabric of the empire. During the phase of "gathering the Russian lands" in the 15th and 16th centuries, Muscovy extended its political rule and wiped out alternative forms of government, as in Pskov and Novgorod in the early 16th century. However, when Muscovy started expanding into non-Russian lands (Finno-Ugric, Turkic, etc.), these methods gradually changed to accommodate local differences so that rule was easier. The Tsar still ruled through a military governor (a voevoda), but local elites were permitted some latitude in governing their own affairs.[240] Matthew Romaniello's recent illuminating book on the incorporation of the Khanate of Kazan demonstrates this tendency, with Kazan setting the example of how the Tsarist government would handle subsequent borderland incorporations. Although the official rhetoric of the Tsar and the Orthodox Church emphasized the destruction of an Islamic adversary, the actual method of governing Kazan approximated what Romaniello calls "layered sovereignty," with local non-Russian and non-Orthodox groups enjoying significant areas of autonomy.[241] These arrangements served Russian imperial interests for a couple reasons. First, they reduced the resources that the imperial center needed to expend to maintain the outlying areas of the empire while also reducing conflict with the inhabitants of those areas. Second, they helped to secure the primary strategic goal of the empire of using peripheral regions to

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[239] Leo Okinshevich, *Ukrainian Society and Government, 1648-1781*, Series - Ukrainian Free University□: Monographs□; V. 27 (Munich: Ukrainian Free University, 1978). 24.
[240] Zenon E. Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy: Imperial Absorption of the Hetmanate, 1760s-1830s*, Monograph Series / Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute (Cambridge, Mass: Distributed by Harvard University Press for the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1988). 12-14.
[241] Matthew P. Romaniello, *The Elusive Empire: Kazan and the Creation of Russia, 1552-1671* (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012).

protect the imperial core, since geopolitical vulnerability was always a concern for Russian rulers.[242]

No matter how generous the initial provisions were, the Tsarist Empire did not view the arrangement in Pereiaslav as permanent and encroached on it repeatedly before the abolition of the Hetmanate in the late 18th century. This process repeated itself in the other borderland areas, as the Tsarist state frequently encroached on granted privileges and guarantees of autonomy when it served imperial interests. In the case of the Hetmanate, revision of Pereiaslav happened almost immediately. As Paul Robert Magocsi notes, after the death of Khmelnitsky, the new Hetman Ivan Vygovsky turned away from the Muscovite connection with the aim of getting more favorable terms to rejoin the Commonwealth. The abortive Union of Hadiach of 1658-1659 led to renewed conflict between Muscovy and the Commonwealth and resulted in the division of Cossack Ukraine into Muscovite and Polish-Lithuanian spheres of influence.[243] Later the Tsarist Empire reached an agreement with Poland-Lithuania to formally partition Hetman Ukraine, creating the distinction between Right-Bank and Left-Bank Ukraine. The partition prompted an attempt on the part of Hetman Doroshenko to reunify Ukraine by seeking a relationship with the Ottoman Empire. However, the unpopularity associated with helping an infidel and the lack of strength of the Ukrainians to change the status quo doomed this project to failure and Doroshenko was forced into retirement and exile near Moscow.[244]

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[242] For a good explanation of this strategic logic see LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831*.
[243] Paul R. Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine: The Land and Its Peoples*, 2nd, rev. and expanded ed (Toronto□; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2010). 235-9.
[244] Subtelny, *Ukraine*. 146-8.

The empire also moved to redefine the legal relationship that was established in Pereiaslav, oftentimes using underhanded means to extract greater concessions from the Hetmanate. Subsequent articles and revisions of the Treaty eroded the Hetmanate's rights and privileges, especially under Khmelnitsky's son Yury, who was agreed to a different version of the Pereiaslav treaty in 1659. As Magocsi argues, the position of the Hetmanate deteriorated during the period of the "Ruin" (1657-1686) as a result of struggles between Muscovy, Poland-Lithuania, and the Ottoman Empire, with the Cossack state awkwardly attempting to shift alliances between these parties when the opportunity arose. By the time of the 'eternal' peace of 1686, the territory of the Cossack state was divided between the control of all three states, with the Hetmanate in a much weaker position vis-a-vis the Tsarist government.[245]

Although these changes established the juridical basis of Tsarist dominance in the Hetmanate, and although the Hetmanate often proved to be too divided to stand up to Tsarist intervention, it would be incorrect to conclude that the process of incorporating the Hetmanate was complete. The process of administrative centralization and the true abrogation of the Hetmanate's authority would not commence until Peter I's reign, and until that point the Hetmanate did possess some resources that made it able to resist some Tsarist encroachment. For one, the empire did not enjoy overwhelming superiority in the military realm, making it difficult if not impossible to implement policies by force. Until the 18th century, the Tsarist troops garrisoned in the Hetmanate were greatly outnumbered by armed Cossacks, and these troops were generally centered in towns under the *voevody*'s control. As Orest Subtelny details, on several occasions in the 17th century clashes between Tsarist and Hetman troops ended with Cossack victory, such as

[245] Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*. 239-242.

in the 1659 repulsion of a levy of 150,000 Tsarist soldiers at Konotop. Moreover, the Cossacks proved capable of limiting the Tsarist expansion of power through the *voevody* by forcibly expelling *voevody* and their troops from several towns in 1668, leading to a restriction of the *voevody* to five towns with fewer troops.[246] Although the empire certainly possessed the military potential to violently subjugate the Hetmanate during this period, such a policy would have been extremely costly, increasing the incentives for the Tsarist government to seek other strategies for expanding its influence.

Other, less costly, strategies were indeed available to the Tsarist Empire. Although Cossack military potential prevented easy assimilation, the social divisions within the Hetmanate allowed the Tsarist Empire to use the classic imperial strategy of divide and conquer. The Hetmanate and the Cossacks as a social class were premised to some degree on the principle of egalitarianism, but in the 16th and 17th centuries, Cossackdom had manifested divisions between poorer, rank and file Cossacks and the Cossack officers, the *starshyna*. The Tsarist Empire exploited this division by preserving the economic privileges of the *starshyna*, while also preventing peasants from entering Cossack ranks as they frequently had under Polish-Lithuanian rule. These changes served the economic interests of the *starshyna*, who were the primary landholders in the Hetmanate, and made it likelier that they would align themselves with the Tsarist Empire.[247] This dynamic will be explored in greater depth in the subsequent chapter. The Cossacks also tended to neglect urban areas and the emergent merchant class, and so urban governments tended to go to the empire rather than the Hetmanate for confirmation of Madgeburg Law privileges and other economic matters. Although urban areas

[246] Orest Subtelny, "Russia and the Ukraine: The Difference That Peter I Made," *Russian Review* 39, no. 1 (January 1, 1980): 1–17. 6-7.
[247] LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831*. 70-1.

eventually began to participate more in Cossack politics, this division between town and countryside was crucial to the early weakness of the Hetmanate in the face of Tsarist rule.[248]

Overall, the incorporation of the Hetmanate into the Tsarist Empire proceeded inconsistently over the second half of the 17th century, and did not conclude until the Tsarist state began to exercise more administrative control over Ukraine during the 18th century. The incorporation of the Hetmanate was mostly driven by geopolitical concerns (Russian strategic positions vis-a-vis both Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire) and the newly-acquired territory performed a useful function as both a buffer zone and a base for launching raids against the Crimean Tatars. The initial effort to bring the Hetmanate into the imperial sphere of control followed the traditional Tsarist strategy of offering autonomy to non-Russian areas in return for loyalty to the Tsar. However, as with these other areas, the Tsarist state sought to redefine the relationship when it was expedient for the purpose of expanding Tsarist control and influence. As Marc Raeff notes in his article on Catherine the Great's nationalities policies in non-Russian territories, concessions were employed to native elites to make the process of incorporation easier. However, given the cameralist beliefs of the government (the idea that the state was a single unit to be managed in a uniform manner), these concessions were always to be directed to the purpose of drawing native elites into Tsarist institutions, so that they would become integrated into the empire and 'drag' the rest of their peoples with them.[249] The case of the Hetmanate fits into this intellectual model well. Although the Hetmanate did possess some means of resisting this expansion of imperial control

[248] Okinshevich, *Ukrainian Society and Government, 1648-1781*. 60-1.
[249] Marc Raeff, "Uniformity, Diversity, and Imperial Administration in the Reign of Catherine II," in *Political Ideas and Institutions in Imperial Russia* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1994). 141-155.

(primarily in the domain of military power), Tsarist exploitation of divisions in the Hetmanate proved to be successful in the long-term.

The Incorporation of the Baltic Provinces and Finland

The de facto incorporation of the Baltic provinces of Livland and Estland into the Tsarist Empire was accomplished in 1710, when Peter I was successful in expelling Sweden from the territories, and was formalized in the 1721 Peace of Niestadt. Convincing the local elites, the Baltic Germans, to accept Tsarist overlordship was relatively easy, as the Baltic Germans had begun to feel dissatisfied with the rule of Sweden and Charles XI. The reason for this dissatisfaction lies with Charles' administrative changes in the Swedish Empire during the 1690s, which included an effort to reclaim for the crown lands that had been granted to local gentry.[250] The integration of the Baltics was accomplished in a simple manner: the Tsarist Empire offered to confirm rights and privileges dating back to the times of the Teutonic Order and to undo the Swedish *reduktion* in return for the Baltic Germans shifting their allegiance to Petersburg. Subsequently, the Baltic Germans were given many opportunities to occupy importance positions in the empire, which they took advantage of in order to gain influence over the imperial government.[251] John Armstrong conceptualizes the Baltic Germans as a "mobilized diaspora" in the Tsarist Empire, seeking to influence the imperial government and protect their position by virtue of the expertise they offered Tsarist government. As Armstrong notes, the educational rates and representation in Tsarist governing

[250] Bartlett, "The Russian Nobility and the Baltic German Nobility in the Eighteenth Century."
[251] LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831*. 68-70. Also see: Edward C Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1984). 7-8.

institutions (especially in the Foreign Ministry) of the Baltic Germans was significantly out of proportion to their actual numbers, and they remained an important (and loyal) group until the dissolution of the Empire.[252] The Baltic capitulation was based on the 1561 privileges granted by Sigismund Augustus and preserved linguistic, economic, and political rights for the Baltic German *Ritterschaften*. However, these privileges did not formally abridge the freedom of action by the Tsar, as Peter wanted to retain the ability to change policy should circumstances change. Thus, even though the Ritterschaften were able to incorporate with more rights than they had enjoyed under Sweden, the empire retained power to eventually revisit these rights and privileges.[253]

The generosity of the empire's concessions to the Baltic territories in the capitulation agreement reflects both geopolitical and administrative realities. Starting in the 13th century, the Baltics and Finland became an area for competition between principalities such as Novgorod and Sweden, and later on with the consolidation of Poland-Lithuania, this competition gained a new member and expanded to the territory that comprises contemporary Ukraine. In essence, these frontier zones for the empire acquired overriding strategic importance vis-à-vis regional rivals, even though those rivals began declining in the 18th century.[254] As Thaden observes, at the time Tsarist officials saw the speedy integration (and thus rights and privileges) of the Baltic territories as a necessary move to consolidate Tsarism’s position vis-à-vis Sweden and Poland-Lithuania.[255] John LeDonne argues that Tsarist "grand strategy" called for a ring

[252] John Armstrong, "Mobilized Diaspora in Tsarist Russia: The Case of the Baltic Germans," in *Soviet Nationality Policies and Practices* (New York: Praeger, 1978). 63-104.
[253] Andrejs Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*, Cambridge Concise Histories (Cambridge, UK□; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011). 128-130.
[254] LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831*. 18-22.
[255] Thaden, *Russia’s Western Borderlands, 1710-1870*. 4.

of clients and ‘friendly kingdoms’ around the periphery of the empire's "heartland." This manifested itself in declining powers increasingly under the empire's sway (Poland-Lithuania and Sweden) and smaller client societies that became more fully integrated into the apparatus of the empire (the Baltics, Finland, Hetman Ukraine).[256] The deployment of a couple dozen regiments in the Baltics made the area into a base of operations and staging ground for the empire's mobile military strategy of deep penetration into enemy territory. Without these bastions, it would have been difficult for the empire to manage some of its offensive drives into Central Europe and Scandinavia.[257] After 1763, the Tsarist Empire staged troops in the Baltics to hedge against possible changes to the European order, since that provided the most flexibility in response to perceived threats.[258] These foreign policy objectives provided the local elites with an important source of leverage over the empire, and the Baltic Germans employed this leverage to construct a *quid pro quo* arrangement with the imperial center such that they guaranteed their loyalty to the empire in return for the protection of their local prerogative.[259] As will be discussed later, it also came to be based off of the influential role of many Baltic Germans in Tsarist imperial administration.

Framing the activities of the Tsarist Empire in the borderlands as constituting a "grand strategy" exaggerates a historical reality of contingency and ad hoc policy adjustment, but it does capture a basic motivating force of the empire. Although Tsars like Peter I largely reacted to international situations rather than operating from a conscious plan, their policies nevertheless demonstrated a general direction towards

[256] LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831*. 61.
[257] Ibid. 51.
[258] Ibid. 111-2.
[259] Bartlett, “The Russian Nobility and the Baltic German Nobility in the Eighteenth Century.” 234.

territorial expansion and the creation of a fiscal-military state capable of pursuing said expansion. This remains true even in the period before Peter's reforms, as Ivan IV's efforts to expand the Muscovite state into the other Russian principalities and non-Russian territories like Kazan served to reinforce geopolitical interests as well as religious and ideological interests.[260] Additionally, as Michael Paul has noted, Muscovy began pursuing its "military revolution" in the 16th-17th centuries before Peter's reign, responding to the competitive pressures caused by advances in military technology.[261] The acquisition of the Western Borderlands was oftentimes opportunistic (as with the Hetmanate and Finland) rather than the product of long-term deliberate policy, but these opportunistic gains also served to buttress the empire's geopolitical position vis-a-vis its rivals. As such, the idea of a "grand strategy" can only be metaphorical, seeking to capture how the imperial government consistently responded to political and military pressures in the international arena, and must not be taken to imply the presence of a kind of "master plan" for imperial dominance and expansion.

In the late 18th and all of the 19th century, the Tsars sought to address the entrenched power of the Baltic Germans and the administrative deficiencies of the central Russian administration, starting with the policies of Catherine II. Until that time, the forward deployment of Tsarist troops in the region acted as a placeholder for imperial authority. Deployment not only served to help Russia project force in the case of aggression, but also allowed the empire to secure tranquility in the borderland client societies without committing too many policing resources. Thus, the borderlands were left relatively autonomous with the assumption that the basing of regiments would keep

[260] Romaniello, *The Elusive Empire*.
[261] Paul, "The Military Revolution in Russia, 1550-1682."

them in line.[262] After 1763, this deployment was increased to allow Russia greater capability to respond to changes in the European balance of power while also possessing internal flexibility.[263] This policy was not intended to achieve true integration of the territories, however, and despite the superficial placement of Russian governing institutions over Baltic institutions, the Baltics remained administratively, culturally, and intellectually within the European orbit.[264]

The incorporation of Finland into the Russian Empire in 1808-1809 followed a similar pattern as the incorporation of the Baltics from a century before, though the geopolitical stakes were higher in the case of Finland. As with the Baltics, the proximate cause of the Tsarist Empire gaining the new territory was a successfully prosecuted war with Sweden, which commenced in 1808. Unlike the Baltics, Sweden was not the predominant concern of the empire as it had been during Peter's time, as the Swedish empire had become disastrously weakened by this point in time, due to a feeble monarchy and extensive corruption and venality among its servitors.[265] The incorporation of Finland was more a result of opportunity than long-term ambition. The war in 1808-9 gave Russia the opportunity, and the pressures from Napoleon and Turkey gave the empire an incentive to shore up its strategic position. The Finns were granted much the same guarantee of rights as the other Baltic states, but in reality this went further in its new status as a Grand Duchy, along with a number of privileges that were not present in Estland, Livland, or Kurland.[266] Even though Sweden was weak vis-à-vis the Tsarist

[262] LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831*. 178-9.
[263] Ibid. 111-2.
[264] Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*. 126.
[265] LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831*. 64-5.
[266] Osmo Jussila, *From Grand Duchy to Modern State: A Political History of Finland Since 1809* (London: Hurst & Co, 1999). 7-8.

Empire, it was possible that it could take advantage of Russia's position during a potential future conflict with Napoleon, and so a deep strike into Swedish territory and the gain of a buffer territory offered Russia the guarantee that Sweden would be in no position to resume conflict within the foreseeable future.[267] Sweden's internal weakness made this strategy relatively easy to achieve, as Swedish mismanagement of its own territories had cultivated dissatisfaction in Finland, making its separation from the empire less problematic.

Russia's position vis-à-vis Napoleon and other external rivals can also help to explain why the privileges promised to the Grand Duchy were so generous. Finland did not possess an overweening gentry class like the Baltic Germans (though the Swedish gentry in Finland, the "Finlandish" elites, did wield considerable power both in the Grand Duchy and in Tsarist political and military institutions), but the Finnish peasantry was already free from serfdom and generally enjoyed higher education levels than in other parts of the borderlands.[268] This made it more likely that forcible integration would be resisted, and indeed this did occur during parts of the 1808-1809 war, with Finnish guerilla groups striking out at Tsarist forces.[269] The resources that would have been necessary to quell such resistance would have distracted Russia from its other continental goals, so Alexander I concluded that the easiest way to ensure the peaceful incorporation of the territory was by granting extensive concessions to the Finns, who could thereby be convinced that they would be better off under Russia than under Sweden. Towards this end, Alexander promised to convene a Finnish Diet (the Sejm), allow Finland to manage most of its own affairs, and to bypass Russian central administration in overseeing the

[267] LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831*. 158-9.
[268] Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870*. 82.
[269] Hosking, *Russia*. 35-38.

territory.[270] The Porvoo Diet of 1809 was a kind of gentleman's agreement between the Tsar and the Grand Duchy, seeking to dispose of several issues including the armed forces, taxation, and other fiscal matters. However, it would take on a mythological status for subsequent generations of Finns, who sought to frame the Diet as the creation of a separate, constitutional Finnish state. This interpretation would prove problematic for the empire in the latter half of the century.[271] The creation of a Finnish State Secretary and Finland's status as a direct subject of the Tsar (bypassing Tsarist administration), effectively ratified Finland's separate role in the empire in a manner unlike other regions besides Poland (which had these privileges revoked in 1830).[272]

Alongside the extensive administrative privileges conferred on Finland, separation between Finland and Russia also proceeded as a result of growing notions of Finnish identity. The concept of a separate Finnish identity was something that was reinforced by Petersburg shortly after incorporation. It was used as a tool to differentiate the Grand Duchy from Swedish rule and from the Swedish gentry within the Grand Duchy, while also positioning Russia as an ally and protector.[273] This was tolerated at the time because it helped to buttress the loyalty of Finnish elites. The de facto autonomy granted to Finland by Russia was greater than that enjoyed under Sweden, and the reuniting of New Finland with Old Finland was viewed very positively. This arrangement, combined with the economic and cultural 'upsurge' experienced in Finland made the upper classes remarkably loyal to the empire.[274] Finland's proximity to the imperial capital of Petersburg acted as an important source of economic growth,

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[270] Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870*. 84-5.
[271] Jussila, *From Grand Duchy to Modern State*. 15-16.
[272] Ibid. 22-3.
[273] Ibid. 24-5.
[274] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*. 97.

especially in sectors like the timber industry. In addition, the same opportunities were opened up the Finnish elites that had previously been provided to the Baltic Germans – the opportunity to serve in the Tsarist government and enhance their own power and prestige. This was an offer that many Finnish officials embraced, and provided for an incentive for officials in Finland to act in the empire's best interests while also working on behalf of Finland.[275]

The Polish Partitions and the Congress Kingdom

The incorporation of Poland into the Tsarist Empire posed different problems than the incorporation of Ukraine or the Baltics and Finland. Perhaps the most crucial problem was the fact that Poland had been a great power rival of the Tsarist state and had cultivated a distinct identity among the *szlacta* (Sarmatianism and the Golden Freedoms) unlike the corporate identity of the Baltic Germans or the Cossack *starshyna*. This made it less likely that the Polish *szlachta* would easily accede to Tsarist rule and come to an accommodation with the state. In addition, Poland's incorporation was comparatively messy, with the first attempt occurring over the span of three separate partitions (in conjunction with Prussia and Austria-Hungary) in the late 18th century, including an attempt at rebellion by the Poles before the Third Partition. This precedent would have been troublesome enough for the state, but it proved to be a brief arrangement as the Napoleonic Wars intervened and bounced control of Poland between France (as the Duchy of Warsaw) and eventually the partition powers (which led to the creation of the Congress Kingdom). Although the constitution granted to the Congress Kingdom

[275] LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831*. 209-10.

attempted to recreate the old imperial dynamic of offering substantial autonomy in return for dynastic loyalty, the situation simply did not match up with the easy incorporation experienced in the Baltics and Finland or the relative ease of suppressing the disorganized Ukrainian Cossacks. The case of Poland offers an interesting example of the traditional imperial logic clashing with the coherent corporate identity that was not amenable to submission.

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was a product of the 1569 Union of Lublin, where the last Jagiellonian monarch, Sigismund II Augustus, helped to construct the beginnings of the Commonwealth's elective monarchy and its constitutional system. Lithuania's role in the commonwealth was mostly in name only, as most elites were thoroughly polonized and Lithuanian speakers comprised a relatively small percentage of the populace (mainly peasants). As a result, Lithuania was often subsumed within Polish interests and aims.[276] It was during the 17th century that the Commonwealth reached the height of its power, briefly dominating Russia during the Time of Troubles and testing its power against Sweden and the Ottoman Empire. However, the Golden Age was relatively short-lived, as by the middle of the century, Poland-Lithuania's position was buffeted by angry neighbors and internal uprisings (most notably the Cossack rebellion of Bogdan Khmelnitsky beginning in 1648). The internal problems of the Commonwealth by the 17th century were largely due to a breakdown in the religious status quo due to the Counterreformation and the 1596 Union of Brest that eliminated the legal foundations of the Orthodox Church. As Paul Magocsi notes, the middle of the 16th century witnessed both an Orthodox revival in the Commonwealth and the stark religious polarization

[276] Jerzy Lukowski, *Liberty's Folly: The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Eighteenth Century, 1697-1795* (Routledge, 1991). 3-4.

brought on by the Counterreformation, which viewed Orthodox Christians as almost equally problematic as Protestants.[277] The Catholic-oriented policies of King Sigismund III Vasa, and the influence of Jesuits served to alienate Orthodox Ruthenians, and the Union of Brest which was intended to reunite the Orthodox in the Commonwealth with Rome was largely rejected by both the Orthodox laity and the Cossacks.[278] As Borys Gudziak argues, the Orthodox clergy in the Commonwealth largely supported the Union to try and eliminate religious disunity, but their assumption that the laity would follow their lead was false and ended up contributing to a heightened level of religious polarization that would help define the course of Commonwealth politics in the 17th century.[279] The combination of the Commonwealth's weakened position internationally and the chaos of its domestic politics made it a ripe target for predatory neighbors during the 18th century.

The Commonwealth's decline coincided with the rise of its traditional rival, the Tsarist Empire, under Peter the Great. Although initially part of the same alliance as Russia during the Great Northern War, Poland-Lithuania suffered both politically and economically after Russia faltered and the Swedish Empire quickly dispatched of the Commonwealth. The use of Commonwealth soil as a battleground seriously damaged the economic base of the Commonwealth and the effects of the war only helped to convince the *szlachta* that reform could only lead to chaos and violence. Even after the tide turned against Sweden after Poltava, Poland-Lithuania did not extract much benefit. All of the

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[277] Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*. 168-176.
[278] Daniel Stone, *The Polish-Lithuanian State, 1386-1795*, History of East Central Europe v. 4 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001). 136-9.
[279] Borys Gudzi□a□k, *Crisis and Reform: The Kyivan Metropolitanate, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Genesis of the Union of Brest*, Harvard Series in Ukrainian Studies (Cambridge, MA: Distributed by Harvard University Press for the Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University, 1998). 252-3.

Commonwealth's neighbors generally did well out of the peace settlement while the Commonwealth actually failed to produce a legal peace settlement with Sweden, further confirming Poland-Lithuania's slide into irrelevance as a major power.[280] Poland-Lithuania's weakness alongside Tsarism's strength granted Peter the luxury of dictating the Commonwealth's position in Eastern European politics, and he opted to keep the Commonwealth weak and intervene in its domestic politics to guarantee that Poland-Lithuania would act as a security buffer for the ascendant empire.[281] This served to keep the empire's other neighbors adequately placated, as a formal incorporation of Commonwealth territory might indicate a dangerous desire for further imperial expansion and thereby destabilize the region's politics, while still allowing Russia to manipulate Poland-Lithuania towards Russian interests.

With Poland-Lithuania weak vis-a-vis its neighbors, it proved relatively easy to maintain the status quo up until the reign of Catherine II. Zawadzki offers an extremely negative analysis of Poland-Lithuania's position in the 18th century, emphasizing its weakness vis-à-vis its neighbors, its economic stagnation, and cultural and intellectual torpor. The Commonwealth was a mostly passive recipient of the politics of the 18th century, with Russia, Sweden, and Prussia contesting for dominance, often within Polish territory itself (especially during the 7 Years War of 1756-1763, where neutral Poland-Lithuania was often used as the battleground for Russia and Prussia).[282] This weakness extended to the political institutions of the Commonwealth, as they discouraged policy

[280] Lukowski, *Liberty's Folly*. 150-1.
[281] Frank W Thackeray, *Antecedents of Revolution: Alexander I and the Polish Kingdom, 1815-1825*, East European Monographs no. 67 (Boulder [Colo.]□: New York: East European Monographs□; distributed by Columbia University Press, 1980). 2-3.
[282] W. H Zawadzki, *A Man of Honour: Adam Czartoryski as a Statesman of Russia and Poland, 1795-1831* (Oxford [England]□: New York: Clarendon Press□; Oxford University Press, 1993). 12.

changes that would alter the status quo while also providing entry points for avaricious foreign powers. Polish law operated in a manner where treaties with foreign powers were incorporated into the domestic legal framework, making it easy for foreign powers to use such treaties to intervene in Polish politics. The presence of the liberum veto and the factionalism between the various magnates also made it easy for foreign powers to disrupt reforms or constitutional changes, as they needed to only get one client to break a Sejm through the use of the veto.[283] The unwise persecution of Orthodoxy within the Commonwealth acted as a convenient pretext for Russia to seize more effective control, which was the case under the more ambitious policies of Catherine II.[284] Altogether, it was the institutions that the so-called 'Noble's Republic' took the most pride in that helped to prove the Commonwealth's undoing, such as the elective monarchy, the 'Golden Freedoms', the liberum veto, and the social and economic privileges of the *szlachta*.

With the death of King August III in 1763, the magnate families of the *szlachta* positioned themselves to benefit from the next elected monarch, and in some cases angled for assistance from Russia and Catherine II. The powerful Czartoryski family in fact invited Catherine to guarantee a favorable succession to the Polish throne, thinking that would put the 'Family' in the position to dominate Polish politics. However, it was Catherine who moved to seize the advantage. Stanislaw Poniatowski's election as Polish king was due to the interventions of Catherine, who wanted a pliant ruler in Poland-Lithuania that could act as a minor partner in an expansive security buffer for the Russian empire. Poniatowski was selected since it was assumed he could be easily controlled

[283] Lukowski, *Liberty's Folly*. 94-5.
[284] LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831*. 63-4.

(since he had been a consort of Catherine in 1755), and along with Catherine's other clients, could help minimize reform measures that may threaten Russian interests in the kingdom.[285] Efforts made by the Czartoryskis to reform the Commonwealth, such as by abolishing the liberum veto, were thwarted by the Russians. Russian interventions to guarantee the religious liberty of Orthodox in Poland-Lithuania also irked the Poles, and in this case brought matters to a head when the Confederation of the Bar formed to oppose Russian machinations. This was the series of events that eventually resulted in Russian intervention and the first partition of 1772.[286]

Poniatowski ended up being less compliant than envisioned, and after efforts were made by him and his allies to strengthen Polish central government, Catherine put even greater restrictions on Poniatowski through her agent Stackelberg, essentially rendering him as a figurehead rather than a real executive authority. The king was no longer capable of giving orders to government agencies without being countersigned by the highest level official in that agency, and the Sejm was effectively given control over those who were theoretically answerable to the king (the Sejm was more easily controlled via clients of the Russians).[287] Despite these measures, however, the dissatisfaction with Russian interference and the weakness of the Commonwealth following the first partition produced a consensus among a segment of the *szlachta* (led by the Czartoryskis) that serious changes were necessary if the Commonwealth were to survive. Thus, paradoxically, it was during the time period leading up to the removal of Poland-Lithuania from the European map that the Commonwealth experienced a cultural and political renaissance, aiming to sweep away the dysfunction of the old order.

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[285] Lukowski, *Liberty's Folly*. 186-7.
[286] Zawadzki, *A Man of Honour*. 14-6.
[287] Lukowski, *Liberty's Folly*. 207-8.

In 1791-2, the Czartoryskis and the king succeeded in finally bringing about much-needed reforms for Poland-Lithuania, but the reforms (and the May 3rd Constitution) produced immediate opposition from their neighbors, with Russia sponsoring the reactionary Targowica Confederacy to oppose the efforts, before finally invading once it was no longer occupied with revolutionary France.[288] The May 3rd Constitution was viewed as an unacceptable strengthening of the Polish government and the possible spread of social revolution right next to Russia's borders.[289] Although the constitution was a relatively conservative one that still retained most of the traditional privileges of the *szlachta*, Catherine had been spooked enough by the French Revolution that even moderate changes were seen as threatening to the traditional order. Moreover, should the May 3rd Constitution be allowed to stand, it was possible that Poland-Lithuania could reassert its independence from Tsarist control, making a hash of Catherine's plans to create her 'Northern System' security buffer in Europe. Given these perceptions, it is not surprising that Catherine opted to invade Poland-Lithuania to assert her authority, destroy the constitution, and initiate the second partition, formally granting yet more territory to Russia, Prussia, and Austria, leaving the Commonwealth as a small rump state.

The Third Partition in 1795 finally removed Poland-Lithuania as a political unit from the face of Europe, although only the most recalcitrant nobles lost their lands and fortunes. The cause behind the partition was the outbreak of a short-lived insurrection led by the Polish army officer, Tadeusz Kosciuszko, which sought to reclaim the Commonwealth's political autonomy. Although the insurrection enjoyed a couple minor

[288] Zawadzki, *A Man of Honour*. 28-31.
[289] Lukowski, *Liberty's Folly*. 253.

victories at the beginning of the campaign, it was eventually doomed by a combination of the overwhelming force of the Russians under Suvorov and divisions within its own ranks. Kosciuszko understood that to sustain a rebellion in the face of Russian power, Poland-Lithuania needed to mobilize a broad swath of its people, and above all else the peasantry. This necessitated the abolition of serfdom and the alleviation of exploitation, which Kosciuszko decreed, but which were ultimately blocked by conservative nobles concerned about the 'Jacobin' principles that Kosciuszko represented.[290] This division between the forward-looking elements of the Commonwealth who acknowledged the necessity of reforms and the conservatives who distrusted all change as striking against their power base would plague Polish-Lithuanian politics in the 19th century as well, proving to be a particular problem during the 1830-1 insurrection. Regardless, Catherine's actions firmly ended Peter's policy of keeping Poland-Lithuania weak but independent, and the decision to incorporate Poland-Lithuania into the empire in such a way shaped the progression of Polish-Russian relations in the 19th century. It is a fitting symbol of the different paths to incorporation that it was actually a pair of Baltic Germans (Jakob von Sievers and Otto von Igelstrom) that helped to rule Poland-Lithuania on Russia's behalf after the last partition.[291]

In any discussion of Tsarist policies in Poland-Lithuania, the period ranging from the creation of the Duchy of Warsaw under Napoleon to the creation of the Congress Kingdom in 1815 demands close attention. Although the third partition was intended to permanently remove the name of Poland from the European map, a scant two decades

[290] Emanuel Halicz, *Polish National Liberation Struggles and the Genesis of the Modern Nation: Collected Papers*, Odense University Studies in History and Social Sciences v. 73 (Odense, Denmark: Odense University Press, 1982). 23-4.
[291] LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831*. 103-4.

later a version of Poland reemerged under the auspices of Napoleon as the Duchy of Warsaw. Established in 1807 by the provision of formerly Prussian Polish lands in the Treaty of Tilsit, the Duchy offered Poles a chance to achieve national revival, which gave most prominent Poles ample reason to switch their allegiance to France rather than attempting to work out an alternate arrangement with the partition powers. This support was not unanimous, as some well-known families were skeptical of or hostile to Napoleon (the Czartoryskis are the best example, as Prince Adam Czartoryski evinced a great loathing of the French emperor).

Once the tide turned against Napoleon, the legacy of the Duchy was one of the things that the victors had to contend with, Russia most of all. The other partition powers simply wanted a redivision of the lands of the Duchy and a return to the status quo of the partitions, but given the hopes inspired by the Duchy, this path offered the potential for continual unrest in the Polish lands. Czartoryski and other influential Poles wanted to preserve the independence of some Polish unit at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, but were faced with the opposition of key Russian officials, the opposition of Prussia and Austria, the ambivalence of Britain, the lingering commitment of some Poles to Napoleon's cause, and the persistent and strident opposition of Russian elites.[292] Alexander initially hedged on the Polish question, since articulating a definite policy could undermine relations with either the Poles or with allies during a critical stage of the war, but as the war wound down, he became increasingly solicitous of Polish aspirations and closer to Czartoryski's position. The Tsar's decision to pursue a semi-independent Poland at the Congress of Vienna perturbed Russia's neighbors and found little support from other participants like Britain and France. Thackeray argues that in addition to

[292] Zawadzki, *A Man of Honour*. 212-7.

Alexander's desire to separate the Poles from Napoleon by offering the regeneration of the Polish state, he was also seeking to improve Russia's position by reasserting the traditional use of Poland as a weak buffer state and a potential springboard to future expansion. His advisers, Nesselrode in particular, saw this path as a folly that would eventually cost the empire great pain, and only serve to antagonize both allies and the Russian people.[293] Despite these objections, Alexander pursued his stated policy sincerely and in one act of generosity to Poland, he decided to allow the Polish army that had remained loyal to Napoleon until the end to retain its arms and ranks, and be restored as the official army of the Congress Kingdom.[294]

The foundation of the Congress Kingdom of Poland, in perpetual union with the Russian Empire, was a watershed moment in Tsarist imperial practices. Although previous regions within the Empire had been granted a degree of political and cultural autonomy, the provisions of the Congress Kingdom went far beyond even the generous terms of incorporation for the Grand Duchy of Finland. The 1815 constitution was a liberal document that enshrined the rights of man, even as it confirmed the Tsar's preeminent role in Polish politics. Had it been fully implemented and observed, it would have allowed for a relatively autonomous political system with a full range of rights, and the possibility of a more federal political structure for the empire as a whole.[295] The motives for creating Congress Poland were manifold, and some conflicting with others. In the first place, Congress Poland was an attempted solution to the unique problem of integrating the *szlachta* - a means of controlling Poland while still affording the nobility political power and autonomy. Another motive, which is more questionable given

[293] Thackeray, *Antecedents of Revolution*. 6-7.
[294] Ibid. 10-11.
[295] Ibid. 16-21.

Alexander's hesitations about constitutional rule, was that Poland would become the vanguard for future reforms in the rest of the empire.[296] The Tsar himself hinted at this motivation in public speeches, and some of the tinkering with constitutional reform during his reign seems to suggest that this was a sincere intention. However, most of his closest advisors saw the combination of imperial autocracy with constitutional monarchy as irreconcilable, and when Nicholas I became Tsar in 1825, he directed criticism at this kind of fusion, one of the only areas where he disagreed openly with his brother. Even then, Nicholas still formally observed the constitution until the 1830 insurrection provided the rationale for its elimination.

There is disagreement over what Alexander intended to accomplish by granting Poland a constitution and working towards a constitution for the empire as a whole. One school of thought, reflected by the analysis of Pienkos, argues that Alexander began his reign with a view of constitutionalism compatible with the precepts of the Enlightenment. This perspective separates Alexander's reign into a liberal and a reactionary period, with the Tsar becoming increasingly disenchanted with the prospects of liberalism as he witnessed the outcomes of his policies. In the case of Poland, this argument suggests that his initial concessions in the 1815 constitution were sincere, but that he soured on constitutionalism in Poland due to the perception of ingratitude among the Poles and the machinations of his advisors who wished him to abandon liberalism.[297] Unlike Pienkos, Thackeray assesses Alexander's liberal and constitutionalist sentiments as being more in keeping with a *Rechtstaat* rather than a serious limitation on his autocratic power.

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[296] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*. 87

[297] Angela T Pienkos, *The Imperfect Autocrat: Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich and the Polish Congress Kingdom*, East European Monographs 217 (Boulder□: New York: East European Monographs□; Distributed by Columbia University Press, 1987). 53-4.

Constitutionalism was a means of administrative reform, producing a more efficient, law-governed state, but one in which the tsar would still remain ascendant and unfettered. Insofar as this assessment is correct, it would dispel the notion that Alexander was liberal early in his reign and reactionary later, but instead it would frame him as a relatively consistent realist autocrat.[298] Thus, the increasing conflict between Alexander and the Poles during the brief lifespan of the Congress Kingdom could be explain as a disjunction between different interpretations of constitutionalism, with notable members of the *szlachta* and the Sejm perceiving the 1815 document as an inherent limitation on Alexander's prerogatives as a constitutional monarch. It is impossible to definitively resolve this problem as we cannot fully know Alexander's mind to parse out his motivations, but his subsequent decisions in who was to administrate the Congress Kingdom seems to support Thackeray's approach. Marc Raeff makes much the same argument in assessing Alexander's views on constitutionalism. Although Alexander continued to explore the notion of a constitution for the Tsarist Empire throughout his reign, in practice he rejected any plan that would at all circumscribe his autocratic power.[299] Viewed in light of how he treated constitutionalism in the empire as a whole, his conduct with regards to the Congress Kingdom makes sense.

The most important appointment made by Alexander after the creation of the Congress Kingdom was undoubtedly the appointment of Grand Duke Constantine as the head of the Polish military. Constantine was not popular among the Poles, and Czartoryski pleaded with Alexander at several points to either reconsider his decision or to formally rein in Constantine's scope of power. However, Alexander confirmed his

[298] Thackeray, *Antecedents of Revolution*. 30-2.
[299] Marc Raeff, "The Constitutionalism of Alexander I," in *Michael Speransky, Statesman of Imperial Russia, 1772-1839*, 2nd rev. ed (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969). 29-48.

brother's unbridled control over the Polish military, while also granting him considerable control over the civilian government, since Constantine was not accountable to the Sejm or government ministers and could personally dictate how much of the budget went towards the military. At the same time that Alexander made this decision, he also surprisingly decided not to appoint Czartoryski as the Governor-General of Poland, who had been widely assumed as the obvious person to hold that office.[300] Instead, that position was granted to General Josef Zajaczek, a veteran of the Napoleonic Wars and a reformed Jacobin radical. A man of mediocre administrative capability and newfound conservative sentiment, Zajaczek's appointment as Governor-General was a dispiriting move for Poland, as he clearly had little understanding of constitutionalism and was thoroughly subservient to Constantine (and thus willing to abrogate the constitution in his name). The troika of Constantine, Zajaczek, and Novosiltsev (who was named Imperial Commissioner) as the three most important appointments of early Congress Poland set a bad precedent for how the Kingdom was to be viewed and managed by the Tsar.[301]

Although less successful, the incorporation of Poland into the Tsarist empire matches closely with the imperial logic of expansion and indirect rule. The state had an interest in dismembering its erstwhile rival and using it as a buffer zone for the Russian heartland, a strategy that dated back to Peter I but only transitioned to formal territorial acquisition under Catherine II. Given the corporate strength of the Polish gentry, the *szlachta*, and the unlikelihood that the Tsarist state could adequately project administrative power over the entire territory, the traditional imperial strategy of co-opting local elites through offering extensive political and economic concessions guided

[300] Pienkos, *The Imperfect Autocrat*. 32.
[301] Thackeray, *Antecedents of Revolution*. 25-6.

Tsarist policy. Poland's path diverged from the other borderland regions in that its incorporation was messy and the *szlachta* were not as willing as other borderland elites to submit to an external ruler. However, Poland's path also diverged due to new ways of thinking about politics in the early 19th century, with a greater emphasis on nationality and the language of constitutionalism, which Alexander I employed in creating Congress Poland. The language of rights and constitutionalism complicated Poland's integration due to the heritage of Poland as a semi-constitutional commonwealth where the gentry enjoyed predominant power. Although Tsarist Russia would attempt to transition from the logic of empire to the logic of the national state over the course of the tumultuous 19th century, Poland's incorporation offers a glimpse into the conflict of these two logics in embryo.

Conclusion

The incorporation of the Western Borderlands into the Tsarist Empire was consistent with the logic of state-building in a multiethnic empire, but the strength and disposition of the local elites in the borderlands explains the variation in incorporation settlements. Although there were other important factors present in each of the borderland cases, a significant motivation across all of the cases for the incorporation was geopolitical, with the Russian core acquiring a ring of buffer territories between itself and external rivals like Sweden, Prussia, and smaller groups like the Crimean Tatars. This motivation was regularly articulated as part of Tsarist foreign policy, with Peter's attempts to buttress his position in the Great Northern War and Catherine's desired "Northern League." However, pursuing this objective was not uncomplicated, as the Tsarist state rarely possessed

enough administrative capacity to project direct rule into these territories. Tsarist military predominance was not in question, as the Tsarist military generally overmatched local forces, but to do so would have required committing substantial resources to the subjection and control of these territories. Thus, the policy of seeking to co-opt local elites was borne out of a simple cost-benefit analysis where the costs of direct control were deemed to be too high when compared to the much lower costs of indirect rule. Indirect rule required coming to an understanding with the local elites, and offering concessions in the form of political, economic, and cultural autonomy. The objective was to acquire adequate loyalty to the state such that state interests could be secured, with military force sitting in the background to prevent defection. During times when the state enjoyed greater leverage (either through increased state power or favorable geopolitical conditions), it took the opportunity to revisit the original agreements and seek modifications that permitted greater control (though not so much as to provoke opposition from the local elites).

This strategy worked very well in the Baltics and Finland, reasonably well in Ukraine, and poorly in Poland. In the Baltics and Finland, the entrenched local elites were receptive to collaboration with the Tsarist government and in fact used the government to help reinforce their position. In Ukraine, incorporation was achieved, but not without provoking occasional conflicts with Cossack forces, culminating in the "treason" of Hetman Ivan Mazepa during Peter I's reign. In Poland, incorporation was almost a complete failure, and there are a few key reasons to explain this different outcome. For one, the Baltics, Finland and Ukraine were all peripheral territories to Eastern European geopolitics while Poland was itself a major player for a substantial

period of time. This was bound to create different political expectations among the local elites, the *szlachta*, which will in part be addressed in the next chapter. However, the incorporation of Poland was also complicated by the injection of notions of constitutionalism into what had previously been an issue of suzerainty - by granting Congress Poland a constitution, the Tsarist state created a different relationship between itself and Poland unlike the other borderlands. Finally, the Polish case was complicated by a greater disconnect between what was promised - a constitutional order - and what was actually imposed. The closely-managed administration under Grand Duke Constantine, General Josef Zajaczek and Commissioner Nikolai Novosiltsev did not match up with the "lighter touch" employed in the other regions. It created a situation where discontent was almost guaranteed to arise, which was heightened by the character of the Polish *szlachta* vis-a-vis the other local elites in the borderlands.

The disposition of the local elites towards the Tsarist state can therefore be seen as an important variable that helped to determine the character of incorporation. However, the strength of those elites must also be considered, with that strength being primarily measured through the political and economic power exercised by the elites and the presence of coherent corporate institutions. In the Baltics especially the Baltic Germans demonstrated the salience of gentry strength through their effective use of local government institutions and the Ritterschaften to secure and protect their privileges. The Swedish-influenced elite of Finland enjoyed a similar political position, although they did not possess the same degree of economic power as the Baltic Germans. Conversely, the absence of strength and working institutions helps to explain the inability of the Cossack Hetmanate to defend its political privileges. The Cossack starshyna were indisputably the

most powerful group in the Hetmanate, but they did not enjoy a long history of consolidating their privilege and the Hetmanate itself had relatively underdeveloped political institutions. The early defection of the Ruthenian gentry to Polish influence helped to create a situation where Ukraine lacked a strong, indigenous gentry that could carve out and defend a distinct sphere of influence. Thus, when it came time to bargain with the Tsarist state during and after formal incorporation, the Hetmanate was operating from a much weaker position than was the case in the Baltics or Finland. The role of local elites and their influence during the process of incorporation is the topic of the next chapter and will allow us to expand on this line of reasoning.

CHAPTER IV

THE INFLUENCE OF LOCAL ELITES IN THE WESTERN BORDERLANDS

If the process of incorporating the Western Borderlands followed the imperial logic of providing substantial autonomy in return for state loyalty, the power and disposition of the local elites within the individual border territories dictated the character of the policies of incorporation. In seeking out reliable local clients willing to observe Tsarist interests, the state was interested in several qualities. First, it was seeking clients who possessed an adequate enough power base that they could credibly guarantee social stability within the border territories. Second, the state was interested in what the local elites offered in terms of political and economic expertise, so that they could act as effective servitors in Tsarist bureaucracy (thus saving the state from having to dispatch Russian officials to govern the territories). Third, the state was interested in consistent and predictable cooperation from the local elites, which required relatively minimal dissent and the absence of significant factions resisting Tsarist rule. All of these qualities were essential to fulfilling the primary objectives of the Tsarist state: the reliable extraction of resources in the form of taxation and the provision of enhanced geopolitical security. If these basic objectives were met, then the state was willing to countenance a substantial degree of political and economic autonomy as payment to the local elites, not out of any idealistic motive of self-government, but as a means of avoiding incurring the costs of directly governing those territories.

Out of all the borderland territories, the Baltic Germans (and the Finnish elites to a lesser extent) met these criteria for being effective state clients. The Baltic German *Ritterschaften* had a vested interest in using Tsarist rule to solidify their own political and

economic position (since the Baltic Germans were a small minority among the Baltic populations of Latvians and Estonians), and they also offered a substantial reserve of expertise that the state could tap into (especially compared to the Russian *dvorianstvo*, at least until part way through the 19th century). Their close collaboration with the state is demonstrated by the sheer number of Baltic Germans that appeared in high ranked positions within the Tsarist bureaucracy. The Finnish elites offered a comparable amount of local experience that was essential to Tsarist management of the Grand Duchy of Finland, but their smaller numbers meant that they did not penetrate Tsarist bureaucracy to the same extent, although they were well-represented in Tsarist military institutions. In contrast, the Ukrainian *starshyna* possessed the same willingness to aid and abet Tsarist rule, but as a group they did not possess the same power base or expertise as the Baltic Germans. *Starshyna* incapacity to control the Cossack rank-and-file led to increasingly direct control on the part of the Tsarist state, and they were eventually absorbed into the Russian *dvorianstvo* as a lesser partner. Ukrainian names show up among high Tsarist officials, but in the secular realm they made less of an impact than the Baltic Germans. Instead, as Bushkovitch notes, Ukrainians achieved prominence in the Tsarist Empire in the religious realm, extensively influencing the character of Orthodoxy through religious writings and supplying a significant portion of the clergy and religious elites.[302] Finally, the Polish *szlachta* had the sufficient power base, both politically and economically, to act as effective clients of Tsarist rule, but the *szlachta* were also riven by factions and lingering resistance to Tsarist rule. Perceptions of Polish unreliability led to more direct efforts on the part of the state to control Polish territory, which only increased the resistance among influential parts of the *szlachta*. This culminated in the ultimate failure

[302] Bushkovitch, *Religion and Society in Russia*.

of Tsarist incorporation policy when Congress Poland descended into open revolt in 1830-1.

The relationship between the local elites and the Tsarist state mirrors the logic that Margaret Levi lays out in explaining the bargaining process conducted between the state and internal rivals.[303] Although cooperative elites acted in a manner that ended up buttressing Tsarist rule, they nevertheless represented the kinds of side-payments that the state needed to make to avoid costlier measures of direct rule. Even in the cases where Tsarist concessions proved unnecessary or unsuccessful, the state operated under the assumption that the extraction of resources to support the state (in the case of the Tsarist state, the resources extracted at this early moment were geopolitical advantage and not the typical modes of taxation or manpower, though those would come later) justified lenient and flexible policies that could be tightened later rather than beginning with strict policies that were then loosened. The state made this calculation due to the calculation of its own administrative potential for direct rule, what Mann calls 'infrastructural power' and what Migdal is talking about when he discusses the process of the state penetrating society.[304] Although the Tsarist state existed on the high end of the scale of coercion presented by Tilly, it had little capitalization that it could use as a tool in ruling peripheral territories.[305] Since this imbalance between coercion and capital had helped to produce the traditional landed estates in Eastern Europe as a way to promote loyalty, it made sense for the Tsarist state to extend this socioeconomic bargain to the newly-acquired borderlands and their elites, as well as providing limited political rights that were not afforded to the gentry of the imperial core. This also corresponds to Gerring, Ziblatt, et

[303] Levi, *Of Rule and Revenue*.
[304] Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*.
[305] Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*.

al.'s general argument that institutionalization played an important role in deciding between direct and indirect rule, although this logic broke down in the Polish-Lithuanian case due to the intervening factor of elite orientations in both the imperial center and Poland-Lithuania.

This process of offering side-payments to internal elite groups to buttress the state is also broadly congruent with the role that local elites play in the empire literature, but with some important qualifications that are pertinent to the case of the Western Borderlands of the Tsarist Empire. As Giddens points out, the bargaining process that occurred in Western Europe between states and internal elites eventually acquired a sense of equal participation, with the internal elites extracting political concessions from the state in return for their loyalty and compliance.[306] However, as Eisenstadt (and Giddens) identify, there was no such equality in Eastern Europe (or more broadly, territorially-extensive empires), as states generally avoided making political concessions and instead emphasized economic privileges.[307] The goal of the imperial state was to weaken internal elites and then wed them to the state in a clearly subordinate role, and this was indeed what transpired in the Russian core between the imperial state and the dvorianstvo. The grant of serfdom and economic autonomy was what the Russian gentry received to counterbalance their relative political impotence. But this was not strictly the case in the Western Borderlands, as the state offered extensive political concessions alongside the traditional economic concessions. These concessions can be understood as an admission of the imperial state's weakness at the time of incorporation, and the fact that the state sought to revise the agreements in its favor in the future also indicates its political

[306] Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*.
[307] Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires*.

prudence. Nevertheless, by abandoning to at least some extent its traditional overweening role, the Tsarist government acknowledged the crucial importance of the borderlands and the cooperation of their elites. It is at this point that the strength and cohesion of these elites played the most determinative role in carving out and defending a political niche within the broader Tsarist Empire.

The Starshyna of Cossack Ukraine

The role of local elites in the lands that would become Ukraine in the period preceding and following its incorporation into the Tsarist Empire has notable differences when compared to the elites in the Baltics and Poland. The Ruthenian gentry and later the Cossack *starshyna* had fewer and more poorly-developed institutions of representation than the Polish *szlachta* or the Baltic Germans, and their socioeconomic position was generally weaker than each of the other reference groups. The Ruthenian gentry during the 14th-15th centuries were headed by the princely families that could trace themselves back to the Riurikid dynasty, as well as lesser gentry that were similar to the Polish *szlachta*. At this point, noble lineage was still predominantly tied to military service.[308] The Ruthenian gentry lagged behind its Polish brethren in terms of political influence and wealth, and one of the major reasons why union with Poland was supported was due to the hope that union would lead to the extension of these rights and privileges. Most Ruthenian gentry could still be dispossessed of their land by the Grand Prince, and there were few constraints on royal power similar to the various bargains between the Polish

[308] Subtelny, *Ukraine*. 83-4.

szlachta and their kings.[309] The Ruthenian gentry still controlled most of the landed wealth of the territory and had several notable families that mirrored the magnates of Poland-Lithuania, but their level of political influence prior to joining the Commonwealth was limited by the lack of corporate or estate institutions similar to the Polish *Sejm* or the Baltic German *Ritterschaften*.

Rather than move to develop institutions along these lines, the Ruthenian gentry instead sought to align itself with the Polish *szlachta*. This process accelerated after Poland successfully absorbed the territories that would become the basis of Ukraine, offering the Ruthenian gentry a common political framework under which they could pursue their aspirations. The appeal of the Polish nobility and their culture caused a general trend towards the Polonization of the Ruthenian nobility, with the adoption of Roman Catholicism, extensive intermarriage, and the desire to shrug off the reputation of an 'inferior' culture, as Orthodox culture was considered by its Polish peers. The loss of the Ruthenian gentry to assimilation removed the largest potential source of leadership for the territories, and opened the way to the emergence of the Cossacks.[310] There remained a significant number of influential Orthodox gentry, but they had also become largely integrated into the institutions of Poland-Lithuania. The ruling elites of Poland-Lithuania, for their part, did not discourage this attempt at social mobility, and successfully assimilated Ruthenian gentry did end up enjoying privileges similar to the Golden Freedoms. However, the ruling elites of the Commonwealth also used these aspirations to their advantage by frequently offering up tracts of land in the territories of Ukraine to the Polish *szlachta*, undermining the economic base of the indigenous

[309] Ibid. 88-9.
[310] Ibid. 94-6.

Ruthenian gentry. In Right-Bank Ukraine, where this process was able to proceed more extensively, Polish *szlachta* ended up controlling most land and became a target of hatred for the the local peasantry (a fact that the Tsarist government would exploit when it gained control over Right-Bank Ukraine following the partitions of Poland-Lithuania).

The Cossacks came to prominence as a social estate during the late 16th and early 17th centuries in the territories that would comprise Ukraine. The Cossacks, free men, were tasked with protecting the border against Tatar raids, and provided a ready source of manpower for Poland-Lithuania during wartime. However, they also proved difficult to control and regularly rebelled against Polish-Lithuanian rule, leading to attempts to make registers for the Cossacks to restrain their numbers. Most of these efforts were unsuccessful.[311] Since the primary recruiting grounds for the Cossack host was the peasantry, the Cossacks possessed a hostile attitude towards the Poland-Lithuania and the *szlachta*. In addition to this socioeconomic hostility, the Cossacks also arrayed themselves against Poland-Lithuania in religious terms, seeking to defend the Orthodox faith and to eliminate or escape the Union of Brest of 1596 that had destroyed the basis of Catholic-Orthodox coexistence in the Commonwealth.[312] This disposition made the Cossacks less amenable to inducements similar to those given to the Ruthenian gentry, although Cossack rights and privileges did gradually expand in the 16th and 17th centuries due to their important military role in the frontier-lands. Despite these attempts to either gain the loyalty of the Cossacks or restrict their growth as a social estate, tensions remained and helped to contribute to a series of insurrections and uprisings

[311] Yekelchyk, *Ukraine*. 27-8.
[312] Bushkovitch, *Religion and Society in Russia*. 58.

within Ukraine during the first half of the 17th century.[313] The unsteady relationship between the Cossacks and the szlacta and the conflicts that arose from that relationship act as a preamble to the great uprising of 1648 that led to the creation of the Hetmanate.

The 1648 uprising and the subsequent separation from Poland-Lithuania and union with Muscovy fundamentally changed the Ukrainian lands, although some remnants of the old order were able to find a place in the Hetmanate. After the great revolt of Khmelnitsky, two different paths emerged for the Hetmanate. The first path was represented by the mass of Cossackdom, which represented as many of half of adult males in the Hetmanate during the time period. The egalitarian traditions of the Cossacks, the freeing of peasant laborers and the removal of labor obligations fundamentally changed social relations. The second path was the elitist direction represented by the starshyna, the Cossack officers, who sought to aggrandize their own power and become a new Ukrainian elite. Over time, the elitist strain won out since Hetmans were drawn from the officer corps and saw little reason to rein in the power creep.[314] The new elite formed after the 1648 rebellion fused the old Ukrainian *szlachta* with the new Cossack officer elites. In the Hetmanate, the locus of gentry power could be found in Cossack organizations, including the Society of Notable Military Fellows, which was split into three branches (Fellows of the Standard, Military Fellows, and Fellows of the Banner in order of hierarchical importance). Government positions in the Hetmanate were generally filled by selecting candidates from within this grouping.[315] Ruthenian gentry who styled themselves after the Polish *szlachta* did poorly in the new Hetmanate unless they had sided with the Cossacks, and even then their privileges were under threat by the new

[313] Subtelny, *Ukraine*. 113.
[314] Ibid. 141-2.
[315] Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy*. 30-3.

Cossack elite. Moreover, the Ruthenian *szlachta* were very small in number (especially compared to Poland's *szlachta*), making them a less important client group.[316]

The emergence of the *starshyna* as a new social elite in the Hetmanate had important consequences both for the Hetmanate and for relations between the Hetmanate and the Tsarist Empire. Within the Hetmanate, the *starshyna* evolved in a direction similar to the Ruthenian *szlachta*, through the gradual accumulation of landholdings and economic power over poorer Cossacks and peasants. To reward 'loyal' Cossack officers, the Hetmanate often resorted to the practice of rewarding officers with extensive land grants. As part and parcel of these grants, the Hetmanate also obligated peasants residing on these lands to engage in 'habitual' service to their new landlords, essentially reconstructing the old lord-peasant relationship present before the 1648 uprising.[317] According to Orest Subtelny, by the 18th century this privileged economic position had been firmly cemented, with roughly 1% of the Hetmanate's population (the *starshyna*) controlling over 50% of privately-owned land.[318] This economic realignment also resurrected the presence of a magnate class, with influential Cossack families owning quantities of land that dwarfed the rest of the elite. This position was simultaneously secured by the fact that the *starshyna* monopolized political power by controlling nearly all the posts in the Hetmanate and the Society of Notable Military Fellows, from which Hetmans were selected. By dominating in both the political and economic realm, the *starshyna* became the only important client group for the Tsarist Empire, which led to policies intended to placate the *starshyna* to guarantee their acquiescence to Russian dominance.

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[316] Okinshevich, *Ukrainian Society and Government, 1648-1781*. 44-5.
[317] Ibid. 46-7.
[318] Subtelny, *Ukraine*. 181-2.

Despite their preponderance of power within the Hetmanate, the *starshyna* did not possess adequate institutional leverage to resist the expansion of Muscovite control, and in many circumstances they welcomed it. Although the institutions of the Zaporozhian Host and the Hetmanate approximated the institutions of a sovereign state, the *starshyna* themselves lacked the specialization necessary to develop these institutions, especially when compared to the fully developed corporate institutions found in the Baltics, Finland, and Poland-Lithuania. The *starshyna* fulfilled military, administrative, and judicial functions, but these functions all resided within the fraternal framework of the Cossack Host and did not develop into independent bureaucratic structures (although efforts towards this end were expended under the Hetmanate of Ivan Mazepa in the early 18th century).[319] Combined with the fact that the Hetmanate lacked formal sovereignty, the *starshyna* tended to look towards the Tsarist Empire and the Tsar for the preservation of their privileges. Changes in the 18th century, primarily under Catherine II, reinforced this tendency as the prerogatives of the Hetmanate were attacked in the name of imperial unity. The only group that could have offered a source of resistance to imperial expansion had little interest in sincerely defending the autonomy of the Hetmanate.

Catherine II's reforms in the 1770s and 1780s, paired with the abolition of the Hetmanate itself, cemented the defection of the *starshyna*. The 1775 Statute of the Provinces opened the way for Cossack elites to be included in the Russian dvorianstvo, posing them with a fairly straightforward choice between autonomy and imperial favor. The autonomist movement was relatively weak, so the only secure path available for most of the gentry was to seek dvorianin status and enter into state service.[320] The final

[319] Subtelny, "Russia and the Ukraine." 2-3.
[320] Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy*. 238.

1783 enserfment of the Ukrainian peasantry and the 1785 Charter to the Nobility consolidated the *starshyna's* new position within the empire, granting them rights similar to the dvorianstvo. Careers in the imperial government also opened up, and many Ukrainians (though not nearly as many as the Baltic Germans) reached high levels in Tsarist government in the 18th and 19th century.[321] As Velychenko notes, it can be difficult to get accurate numbers for Ukrainians serving in the government due to the inconsistency of reporting on ethnic or national groups, at least until the 1897 census, and due to the fact that many "Little Russians" did not identify as being distinct from Russians, leading to a blurring of lines between the groups.[322] However, based on a variety of records, Velychenko finds that Ukrainians represented a substantial portion of Tsarist officials in regions that formerly comprised the Hetmanate, although Russians remained the dominant group and increased their dominance over the course of the 19th century (additionally, non-trivial numbers of Germans and Poles also served as administrators in Ukrainian regions, reaffirming the heterogeneous character of the Tsarist bureaucracy).[323] The changes were not universally positive for the *starshyna*, however. The most influential and powerful benefited from the new arrangement with the Tsarist government, but a large number of the poorer gentry lost their status, while a number of groups were reduced to the category of state peasants. Towns in the Hetmanate and clergy were also affected, as the provincial reforms undercut the Madgeburg Law that had prevailed in the towns, and the Ukrainian clergy lost the right to

[321] Ibid. 242-3.
[322] Stephen Velychenko, "Identities, Loyalties and Service in Imperial Russia: Who Administered the Borderlands?," *Russian Review* 54, no. 2 (April 1, 1995): 188–208. 191.
[323] Ibid. 196.

own land.[324] The effect of these changes was to make the Hetman social system conform to imperial Russia's own social structure, undermining the idiosyncratic position of the Cossacks, who lost most of their old power and influence. This same process also occurred in Right Bank Ukraine in the late 18th-early 19th century, with the attack being directed at the economic and political power base of the Polish *szlachta*. In Right Bank Ukraine, over 70,000 Polish nobles out of 410,000 were reduced in status by the imperial government in the early 19th century. This number expanded in subsequent years as the Tsarist government sought to root out noblemen who had used a variety of methods to protect their status from the revision. This was a crucial step in undermining local elites in Right Bank Ukraine and extending imperial influence.[325]

Rather than act as a bulwark for an autonomous Hetmanate, the *starshyna* instead acted in a manner that made assimilation and expansion easier for the Tsarist government. Zenon Kohut attributes this outcome to several factors present in the *starshyna* that differentiated them from other borderland elites. Arguably the most important was the underdeveloped nature of the *starshyna*, which lacked the long gentry traditions and corporate institutions of the *szlachta* and the Baltic Germans. However, cultural and linguistic similarities between the *starshyna* and Russians also played a role, as the *starshyna* were not as clearly different as the Baltic Germans with their German language and Protestantism or the *szlachta* with their Polish language and Catholicism.[326] These points of commonality made assimilation easier, as many *starshyna* did not even

[324] Heinz-Dietrich Lowe, "Poles, Jews, and Tartars: Religion, Ethnicity, and Social Structure in Tsarist Nationality Policies," *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 3 (2000): 52–96. 59-60.
[325] Daniel Beauvois, *The Noble, the Serf, and the Revizor: The Polish Nobility Between Tsarist Imperialism and the Ukrainian Masses (1831-1863)* (Chur, Switzerland□; New York: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991). 80.
[326] Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy*. 276.

identify as being distinct from Russians (hence the term Malorussian, or Little Russian, to refer to Ukrainians in the 19th century). This should not lead to the conclusion that assimilation and integration occurred without resistance, as the Hetmanate did indeed resist the expansion of imperial control up until its abolition. But it does help explain why a consistent opposition group did not really emerge from the *starshyna,* leaving individual Hetmans without a consistent source of support for resisting imperial control. As we will see in exploring the process of administrative centralization in Hetman Ukraine, this was to be a key factor during the absorption of the Hetmanate into the rest of the empire.

The Baltic Germans and Finnish Elites

The Baltic German gentry of Livland and Estland (contemporary Latvia and Estonia) originated as the German-speaking vassals of the Catholic Church and the Livonian Order (which was connected to the Teutonic Knights).[327] With the success of Christian conversion efforts in the Baltics and the decline of the Knights, the Baltic Germans became the landholding estate that exercised both political and economic control in the Baltic territories. When the Baltics came under Swedish control, this arrangement did not change significantly, as the Swedish monarchy confirmed Baltic German estate privileges in several charters during the course of the 17th century, which provided for the continuation of the Baltic *Landtag* as the primary decision-making body in the territories.[328] Swedish control over the Baltic territories relied upon the cooperation of the Livonian elites, who had the tendency to resist crown dictates and frustrate royal

[327] Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*. 88.
[328] Bartlett, "The Russian Nobility and the Baltic German Nobility in the Eighteenth Century." 234.

interests. The monarchy could not push too hard, however, as it feared that the Baltic Germans could easily shift their loyalties to a competing power such as Poland-Lithuania or Tsarist Russia.[329] Until the *reduktion* (Sweden's effort to regain some control over the landed property of the Baltics by assessing proper ownership and extracting financial compensation to sell the land back to the original owners), the monarchy had a difficult time asserting administrative control over the Baltics, since the number of Swedish administrators was limited and were heavily reliant on local, German officials, for their day-to-day operations.[330]

When the Baltics passed to de facto Russian control in 1710, the terms of Baltic capitulation provided the Baltic Germans with a guarantee of continued control alongside a removal of the hated *reduktion*. As the previous chapter detailed, the terms of incorporation were largely driven by Tsarist Russia's geopolitical interests, but the Baltic Germans and their organizations can also help to explain Peter's willingness to provide extensive concessions. In his efforts to reform the empire to be able to compete more effectively with external rivals, Peter saw Baltic German (and Swedish) administrative structures as an attractive model for the reorganization of the imperial bureaucracy. He attempted to translate the urban guilds present in the Baltics into the Russian context (mostly unsuccessfully) and saw the potential for extending Baltic structures to provincial administration.[331] And given the administrative skills of the Baltic Germans themselves, Peter was willing to provide the flexibility so that the Baltic territories could act as a model for later reforms.[332] The Baltic Germans were well-organized, but it was also

[329] Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*. 100.
[330] Ibid. 109.
[331] Bartlett, "The Russian Nobility and the Baltic German Nobility in the Eighteenth Century." 237.
[332] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*. 74.

unlikely they could pose a serious threat to the empire if given a significant amount of autonomy. By the end of the 18th century, there were 4,700 landed estates in the Baltics, though not all were owned by the members of the Ritterschaften and most of them were rather modest in size. In contrast to Lithuania and Poland, there were no magnates with enormous estates, but rather a larger number of gentry with significant holdings.[333]

The administrative reality underlying the capitulation agreement was that it would have been too costly for the empire to impose its will on the Baltics, mainly due to the corporate strength of the Baltic German gentry. As Bartlett puts it, by gaining control over the Baltics, Russia acquired territories with a "strongly-developed, self-conscious and well-organized political system of local administrative and judicial autonomy, and privileged landholding."[334] The *Ritterschaften* and the provincial Diets were effective and long-lived institutions designed to assert Baltic German control over the economic and political life of the peasants.[335] The Baltic Germans stood as the only effective guarantors of order in the newly-acquired territories, and had Russia sought to supplant them, it would have required substantial resource expenditure, which was not possible in the context of a continuing war against Sweden. Peter recognized this state of affairs and made the Baltic privileges contingent on confirmation by each successive ruler of the empire, presumably with the thought that the terms of incorporation could eventually be revisited and amended in the empire's favor. The Baltic Germans tried to have the privileges codified into permanent law, establishing influential lobbies in Petersburg and making alliances with political figures in the imperial center, but they were ultimately

[333] Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*. 178-9.
[334] Bartlett, "The Russian Nobility and the Baltic German Nobility in the Eighteenth Century."
[335] Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870*. 6.

unsuccessful in this venture.[336] In the near term, however, this effort proved to be unnecessary, as Baltic privileges would not be seriously threatened until the reign of Catherine II. After Peter I, the Baltics were able to consolidate their position due to a succession of weak rulers in Petersburg, even though some (such as Anne) were not sympathetic to their position.[337]

The relative corporate strength of the Baltic Germans was mirrored by the relative inability of the Tsarist bureaucracy to assert control over the imperial periphery. The condition of '*maloliude*' (dearth of people) was what led Russia to rely on non-Russians to administer borderland territories more so than any principled commitment to autonomy and traditional privileges. Tsarist Russia simply lacked the educated expert classes necessary to administrate a far-flung empire, at least until the last decades of the empire.[338] Dating from the reign of Ivan III, Tsarist bureaucracy relied at least tacitly on the participation of non-Russians, though the particular identity of the non-Russians shifted over time (Germans remained prominent throughout, but Ukrainians, Finns, and Poles all played a part as well).[339] Baltic Germans took advantage of this situation more thoroughly than other subject populations in the empire, and used their service to the state as a means to build a bulwark against the revocation of the privileges granted in the 1710 incorporation. This is demonstrated by the number of notable Baltic Germans that served with distinction in the Russian government and military, including Lievens, Pahlens, Third Section head Alexander Benckendorff, Kleinmichels, etc. This service, and the privileged position of the Baltic Germans in the empire also eventually provoked

[336] Bartlett, "The Russian Nobility and the Baltic German Nobility in the Eighteenth Century." 235.
[337] Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870*. 14-15.
[338] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*. 129.
[339] Ibid, 132.

resentment among ethnic Russians, as evidenced by General Ermolov's potentially apocryphal request to Alexander I to be promoted to the rank of German.[340] Beyond prominent Baltic Germans, the sheer number of servitors is also impressive, as Hosking remarks that government documents from the 19th century indicate that around 18% of Tsarist administrators were of German origin, with the vast majority of those coming from the Baltic region.[341] It is hard to know how accurate this figure is due to the nature of Tsarist records, though. As John Armstrong notes, the Baltic Germans enjoyed influence and success in disproportion to their numbers, but this does not mitigate the influence of non-Baltic Russian Germans who also served in significant numbers.[342] Moreover, it does not necessarily record the presence of non-Baltic Germans who were granted title in the Baltic gentry by the Imperial government.[343]

The Baltic Germans took advantage of Peter's flexibility during incorporation to turn themselves into a closed estate to help consolidate their political and economic power. The formal register of gentry status, the *Matrikul*, was established in 1728, and only gradually expanded over the course of the 18th century (in contrast to the rapid growth of the Russian dvorianstvo). The Baltics were nominally governed by Tsarist Governors-General, but in practice the Gov-Gens spent little time in the territories and administration was left to local officials and conducted in German, the language of the elite. The Baltic Germans took advantage of their protected position to formalize many aspects of their control over the peasantry, generally by increasing labor obligations and reducing any sort of protections the peasants may have vis-a-vis their lords. Tsarist

[340] Hosking, *Russia*. 160-1.
[341] Ibid, 35-8.
[342] Armstrong, "The Baltic Germans as a Mobilized Diaspora in the Tsarist Empire," in *Soviet Nationality Policies and Practices.*
[343] I am indebted to Dr. Sergey Glebov for providing this distinction.

officials still conducted inspection tours, but these were infrequent and made little impact. As Plakans judges, the Tsarist government would not have been able to alter the status quo substantially at this point short of flooding the territories with Russian administrators.[344] Furthermore, as Bartlett notes, the Baltic Germans also occupied a guiding role in church and educational administration, giving them another source of control over life in the Baltic territories. The Tsarist government left intact Baltic Church laws until 1832, and the Baltic Germans exercised strong influence over Lutheran church organizations due to the role of the Landtag in selecting local pastors. Baltic lobbying also secured the reestablishment of the University of Dorpat in 1801, providing additional opportunities for gentry youth.[345]

Catherine's efforts at administrative Russification were modeled on reforms undertaken throughout the empire, and which were designed to strengthen central rule within the Russian provinces. As such, the efforts were hardly a singling out of Baltic privileges, but instead part of a larger program of asserting tighter imperial control over the territory of the empire. Following the provincial reforms of 1775, Catherine cautiously moved to extend these reforms to the Baltics, but did so in a way to minimize the opposition of the Ritterschaften. The Ritterschaften proved intransigent, so Catherine opted for a more rapid reform, also implementing versions of the Charters to the Towns and Nobility, which struck at the political power base of the Baltic Germans.[346] As in the Russian provinces, the reforms were designed to establish provincial government administrations that were more responsive to the central government, while also making the local elites more accountable. In both Russia and the Baltics, this threatened the

[344] Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*. 129-133.
[345] Bartlett, "The Russian Nobility and the Baltic German Nobility in the Eighteenth Century." 235.
[346] Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870*. 25-7.

traditional assumption that the landholders and aristocracy were free to administer their domains as they saw fit, so long as they complied with Tsarist law. The reforms in the Baltics were premature however, as the empire did little to codify law and introduce more civil servants to oversee the transition, making the reforms vulnerable to reversal, which duly occurred when Paul I ascended to power, though Paul did include the traditional provision that such privileges could be revoked by future Tsars.[347] As mentioned in the second chapter, the reforms also failed in the Russian provinces for much the same reason, as inadequate resources and manpower were allotted to the task of overseeing government reform, leaving local elites free to disregard or skirt the provisions of the law. However, this problem was amplified further in the case of the Baltic Germans, as the gentry and landholders in the interior of the empire could not compare to the organizational resources or political activism of the Baltic Germans.[348] In fact, it is notable that the Russian gentry only achieved a roughly comparable level of privilege as the Baltic Germans when Catherine promulgated the Charter to the Nobility in 1785, as the document firmly established property rights and created protections for the gentry against the autocracy, such as the proscription of corporal punishment.[349]

Although Finland received similar (in fact, more generous) grants of autonomy, and was added to the empire after a successful war with Sweden, the Finnish elites differed significantly from the Baltic Germans. Although there was a gentry in Finland, it was relatively weaker and less organized, and did not have the benefit of the institution of serfdom. As a result, the character of the gentry was more fluid, as it did not make an effort similar to the Baltic *Matrikul* to create a closed elite. By the end of the 18th

[347] Ibid. 30, 96.
[348] Ibid. 23.
[349] Bartlett, "The Russian Nobility and the Baltic German Nobility in the Eighteenth Century." 240.

century, there were roughly 15,000 "persons of quality" in Finland, according to Kirby. Included in this ambiguous classification were the gentry (only around 2,000 persons), military officers, clergy and spiritual leaders, and the educated. Service to the state was essential to retain social standing.[350] Like the Baltics, however, the Finnish elite were generally held in low esteem by the Finnish peasantry, and so the elite benefited from a patron willing to protect their interests. The gentry were distrusted by the common people, who generally supported the Swedish monarchy and opposed Russian designs on the region. During the outbreak of Russian attacks, there were fears of gentry treachery and collaboration with the Russians, since the gentry were far more ambivalent about the Swedish connection.[351] As Andreas Kappeler notes, this distrust was warranted given the fact that Russophilism became prevalent among younger elites near the end of the 18th century, making a section of the gentry open to the possibility of a Russian connection.[352]

During the time period when Finland became part of the Tsarist Empire, Alexander I made a conscious effort to conciliate Finnish elites, including allowing Finnish officers to retain their salaries and position despite the dissolution of the Finnish regiments, and by guaranteeing the preservation of traditional rights and privileges. Finnish insecurity with the arrangement also led to the successful lobbying for the creation of a Committee for Finnish Affairs that would advise imperial officials and guarantee a direct channel of influence to the crown.[353] The majority of the Finnish elite were satisfied with the autonomy provided to the Grand Duchy by Russia, especially since it greatly exceeded the autonomy that had been possessed under Sweden. There

[350] D. G. Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*, Cambridge Concise Histories (Cambridge, UK□; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). 53-4.
[351] Ibid. 70-1.
[352] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*. 95.
[353] Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*. 76-8.

were attempts to extend this autonomy by portraying the 1809 Porvoo Diet as a kind of constitutional moment, but these efforts were restricted to Fennoman activists until the end of the 19th century.[354] Moreover, while Baltic Germans served in the civilian bureaucracy in large numbers, for Finnish elites the military bureaucracy was the more common path. As part of the effort to provide the Finnish elite with an avenue of service to the crown, Alexander I established the Finnish Cadet Corps, which provided educational and career opportunities for gentry youth, many of whom ended up serving as officers in the imperial army.[355] The upshot of these efforts was that the Tsarist government effectively entrenched a local elite in Finland much like in the Baltics. The native officials that were empowered by St. Petersburg comprised a small, almost familial, network of elites which sought to jealously guard against any changes to the status quo. Their conservatism acted as a convenient bulwark against social change that may have disrupted stability in Finland, but also served to frustrate Tsarist efforts at reform, since the bureaucrats were generally in a position to stymie such efforts despite the opposition of the Governor General, the State Secretary, or even the Tsar himself.[356]

This 'honeymoon' period of autonomy lasted far longer in Finland than in other parts of the empire, and consequently Finland avoided most serious Russification efforts until 1899 when Petersburg had already decided to embark on a generalized policy of Russification. Part of the reason why the honeymoon period lasted as long as it did was due to the adept political management of Finnish officials, who sought to prevent developments that could provoke the Tsarist government's ire. Another important

[354] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*. 96-7.
[355] J. E. O. Screen, "The Finnish Cadet Corps, 1819-1903: A Reflection of Finno-Russian Relations and the Language Conflict in Finland," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 81, no. 2 (April 2003): 217–235. 217-8.
[356] Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*. 85-7.

component was the Governor-General appointed to Finland as the Tsar's representative, but that will be covered more in-depth in the next chapter. The most likely source of conflict between Finland and the empire was the perception that Finland existed apart from the rest of the empire (a fact that nationalists pointed out not only in the case of the Baltics, as with Yuri Samarin, but also in the case of Finland). Since learning Russian was not made mandatory for Finns, few bothered to learn the language in favor of the more common Finnish or Swedish, and a similar difficulty attended harmonizing Finnish laws with those of the empire, as the empire simply didn't have the requisite number of officials to base in Finland to oversee such a process.[357] Finnish elites, sensing the unpopularity of their position, took pragmatic steps to improve Finland's image, including teaching Russian in Finnish schools, and strengthening economic ties between Finland and Russia. They also kept close control over domestic dissent or agitation, viewing such provocations as potentially damaging to Finland's position within the empire.[358] This strategy of attempting to keep conflicts under wraps proved successful during the early decades of Finland's incorporation in the empire, though it would become increasingly untenable as the same process of national consciousness that occurred in the Baltics also occurred in Finland. However, at least for the period ranging from the 1830s (when some of the first threats of Russification emerged due to the Polish revolt) to the 1870s, these tactics helped to consolidate Finland's separate status and an emergent sense of Finnish national identity. When Petersburg finally turned to Russify Finland, it would find that this separation had cultivated a greater potential for resistance and unrest in the small Grand Duchy.

[357] Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870*. 208-9.
[358] Ibid. 89-94.

Unlike Ukraine, where the local gentry proved incapable of maintaining political autonomy and were instead eventually absorbed into the Russian *dvorianstvo*, the Baltic Germans and Finnish elites proved more adept at carving out and defending their own niche in the imperial structure. A large part of this was due to the superior administrative organizations and skills of these elites, versus the ill-defined structures of the Cossack Hetmanate, providing the Baltic Germans and Finnish elites with more entrenched social positions while simultaneously offering an attractive skill set for imperial service. This is not meant to imply that their position was unassailable, however, as Russian tsars reserved the right to revisit the incorporation agreements and the elites relied on the Tsarist government to a large extent to secure their local position vis-a-vis distrusting or discontented peasants. However, as Bartlett argues in the Baltic case, this weakness was mitigated by Baltic German loyalty to the crown, the willingness to serve in the Tsarist bureaucracy, and Baltic control over local affairs.[359] The experience in Finland was similar, with a conservative bureaucratic elite ensuring social stability, providing quality military service to the empire, and offering substantial local expertise to Tsarist administrators. As such, the character of the Baltic German and Finnish gentry fundamentally shaped the terms of incorporation into the empire, and led these territories down a different path than Hetman Ukraine.

The Polish *Szlachta*

One of the most remarkable elements of Poland-Lithuania that differentiated it from the other borderlands was the character of its gentry. Like the Baltic Germans, the Polish

[359] Bartlett, "The Russian Nobility and the Baltic German Nobility in the Eighteenth Century." 236.

szlachta enjoyed extensive political and economic privileges, but unlike the Baltic Germans, they enjoyed these privileges within the context of independence from overweening imperial or monarchical institutions. The *szlachta* were also unique in terms of numbers. The *szlachta* constituted between 8-10% of Poland, which was several times more than the aristocracies of other European states. This size was the result of the loose record-keeping done by the Commonwealth, allowing individuals to claim noble background on shaky grounds. It was reinforced by the legal tradition of equality between nobles, even if in practice there were large socioeconomic divides between the poorer, landless nobles and the wealthy magnates.[360] Throughout Poland-Lithuania, it was the magnates who dominated politics, making up around 5-10% of the *szlachta*. Nearly 90% of nobles either owned only their own demesne or little to no land, with unreliable incomes. The magnates could rely on large, diversified estates that consistently brought in high incomes, even during times of war.[361] Fully 40% of the *szlachta* owned no land whatsoever, and were consigned to relative poverty, even at the same time they still nominally had access to the 'golden freedoms' so cherished by the nobility of the Commonwealth. The privileges enjoyed by the *szlachta* provided them with a position of dominance over not only the peasantry, but over ethnic and religious minorities within the territory of the Commonwealth (as most *szlachta* were Catholic Poles). As such, Polish landlords administered territories populated by Poles, Jews, Lithuanians, Belorussians, and Ukrainians. These ethnic inequalities contributed to tensions between

[360] Christopher A Blackburn, *Napoleon and the Szlachta*, East European Monographs no. 497 (Boulder, Colo.□: New York: East European Monographs□; Distributed by Columbia University Press, 1998). 6-7.
[361] Lukowski, *Liberty's Folly*. 14-16.

the Poles and other groups, especially in the case of the Cossacks, who rebelled against *szlachta* rule on several occasions.[362]

The political position of the *szlachta* was also unlike that of other European nobilities, in that they had been successful in binding the kings of Poland to the will of the nobility. This position of dominance extended far back into Polish history, and had been considerably deepened by Poland's conflicts with its neighbors in the 17th and 18th centuries. After 1374, the nobility gained many freedoms, including freedom from taxation, the understanding that no major legislation would be enacted without their consent, the placing of judicial institutions under their influence, as well as countless economic benefits including tying the peasants to the land and forbidding townsmen to purchase landed property. After 1572, the Henrician Articles which established the constitutional order of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and each subsequent *pacta conventa* helped to extend and entrench these 'golden freedoms'.[363] Also enshrined within the 'golden freedoms' was the understanding that if any monarch should break the *pacta conventa*, then the *szlachta* were empowered to form a confederation to oppose that monarch and even capable of dethroning the king to guarantee a more pliant successor.[364] The ideology that the *szlachta* used to assert and defend their superiority was Sarmatianism - a mythos of cultural and racial superiority developed in the 16-17th centuries that traced the roots of the *szlachta* back to Sarmatian steppe peoples that migrated from the lower Volga to populate the area that would become Poland during the

[362] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*. 77.
[363] Lukowski, *Liberty's Folly*. 9-11.
[364] Blackburn, *Napoleon and the Szlachta*. 8-9.

first centuries of the Christian era.[365] As Janusz Tazbir notes, Sarmatianism performed an important integrating function for the *szlachta*, who were able to legitimize their position in the Commonwealth by reference to a glorious past, a past that conveniently disassociated the *szlachta* from the peasantry.[366] Sarmatianism complicated the ability of the *szlachta* to respond to political problems in the Commonwealth and to reform dysfunctional institutions and acted as a significant counterweight to the Polish Enlightenment that emerged shortly before the partitions.[367]

The end result of the position of the *szlachta* and their golden freedoms was that while they were effectively unchallenged by other segments of the population, they were nevertheless fractured in competition with one another. This especially marked the powerful magnate families, as it was almost unheard of to achieve unanimity among the upper nobility on any issue. Inevitably, when a conflict emerged between magnates, it would generally end with one side or another invoking the liberum veto and forcing the dissolution of the Sejm. Pressing political issues could sometimes be handled through the convocation of a confederation, since it avoided the veto rules of the Sejm, but this did not ameliorate the dysfunction of the system as a whole. The magnates could articulate political positions based on their self-interest, but a regard for the Commonwealth as a whole was a mostly foreign concept.[368] The wealthy *szlachta* were also unchallenged in the economic sphere, as the economic privileges they enjoyed guaranteed that no other segment of the population could adequately compete with them. While in other European

[365] Janusz Tazbir, "Polish National Consciousness in the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 10, no. 3/4 (December 1, 1986): 316–335. 318.
[366] Ibid.
[367] Henryk Hinz, "The Philosophy of the Polish Enlightenment and Its Opponents: The Origins of the Modern Polish Mind," *Slavic Review* 30, no. 2 (June 1, 1971): 340–349. 346-7.
[368] Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*. 137-8.

societies towns and merchants had begun to challenge the economic dominance of the traditional landed gentry, restrictions placed on town dwellers ensured this would not be the case in Poland. Moreover, the landed *szlachta* also experienced fewer peasant revolts than in other systems, mainly due to the small and scattered nature of peasant villages within *szlachta* estates. Expressions of discontent were more common on larger estates, but the resources of the magnates made it relatively easy to suppress outward manifestations of peasant dissent.[369]

These were the political and economic conditions that the Tsarist authorities faced when Poland was incorporated into the empire during and after the partitions, and the different circumstances of the *szlachta* undermined the effectiveness of Tsarist policies. Imperial officials faced the same problems in integrating Poland-Lithuania that they had in integrating other borderland regions - namely, reaching a 'modus vivendi' with the local elites so that favorable terms of governance could be established. However, unlike other local elites, the *szlachta* had possessed substantial political power, and as Kappeler argues, were unwilling to completely abandon their past independence and potency.[370] Pursuing their traditional strategy of co-opting local elites, the Tsarist authorities met with success in peripheral areas like Courland, but experienced considerable difficulties in the Polish core. The Courland gentry ended up following the Baltic model and when the empire gained control over Courland, Catherine II appointed a Governor-General and punished those members of the Courland gentry that had opposed submission. Despite this assertion of imperial prerogative, however, the order in Courland remained for the

[369] Lukowski, *Liberty's Folly*. 55.
[370] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*. 81.

most part unchanged from previous arrangements.[371] However, the divisions in Poland-Lithuania between the *szlachta* and the lower classes guaranteed that while the Poles would not accept Russian rule as in the other borderlands, they could also not manage to shake it off. Hosking explains that this was the reason why Poland became the 'festering sore' on the Tsarist body politic.[372]

After the partitions, Tsarist policy under Paul I and Alexander I largely followed the traditional policy of conciliating local elites in the borderlands, although this policy was interrupted by the emergence of Napoleonic France and the eventual creation of the Duchy of Warsaw in 1807. Paul reversed the attempted centralization of his mother, Catherine II, in the borderlands and had allowed the Polish and Lithuanian legal system to remain intact while also preserving *szlachta* dominance in local government. Alexander I continued and deepened this approach, partly due to his friendship with the Polish magnate Adam Czartoryski, and allowed Poland to retain its cultural dominance in Lithuania and Belorussia through the establishment of the Vilna educational district in 1802.[373] In his memoirs, Czartoryski praises Alexander's educational reforms as fundamentally changing the basis of education in the Empire, while his own experience as curator of the Vilna district demonstrated the freedom of action that he enjoyed in making appointments and structuring the new institutions.[374] Through these policies, Russia emerged as the most tolerant and flexible of the partition powers and earned some esteem among the *szlachta*. However, this esteem was challenged by the Napoleonic

[371] Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*. 142, 155-6.
[372] Hosking, *Russia*. 29-30.
[373] W. H. Zawadzki, "Russia and the Re-Opening of the Polish Question, 1801-1814," *The International History Review* 7, no. 1 (February 1985): 19–44. 19-20.
[374] Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, *Memoirs, Prince Adam Czartoryski and His Correspondence with Alexander I: With Documents Relative to the Prince's Negotiations with Pitt, Fox, and Brougham, and an Account of His Conversations with Lord Palmerston and Other English Statesmen in London in 1832*, The Russian Series, V. 8 (Orono, Me.: Academic International, 1968). 306-312.

creation of the Duchy of Warsaw in 1807, because although the *szlachta* were not necessarily happy with the terms of its creation, it still provided for the possibility of the rebirth of a Polish state.[375] Alexander could have countered this splitting of Polish loyalties by making further concessions to the *szlachta* still under Russian control, but he vacillated despite Czartoryski's constant urgings and only made an offer of reuniting the Polish state in 1811 (which the leader of the Duchy, Jozef Poniatowski, duly reported to Napoleon).[376] When Napoleon invaded Russia in 1812, the *szlachta* were mainly ambivalent and adopted a wait-and-see attitude.[377]

This support was not surprising given the position that the Polish nobility enjoyed under the Duchy. The *szlachta* benefited under Napoleonic rule, as despite the principles of the French revolution, Napoleonic policy actually helped to reinforce traditional noble dominance. This was encapsulated by the special privileges provided to the nobility through the Duchy's constitution and the continued noble predominance in the Sejm and Senate.[378] The implementation of the Code Napoleon would also seem to be a threat to *szlachta* dominance, given its abolition of serfdom and the principle of meritocracy in determining who held government office, but even this threat was illusory. The abolition of serfdom was a mostly nominal change that still allowed landholders to exploit peasant labor, a fact of life that would only change when the Polish peasantry was emancipated by the Tsarist government in 1863 to undermine support for the Polish insurrection. Moreover, the privileged position of the *szlachta* gave them an advantage over other sectors of the population, making their continued monopoly over government offices an

[375] Zawadzki, "Russia and the Re-Opening of the Polish Question, 1801-1814." 33,
[376] Ibid. 35.
[377] Ibid. 36-7.
[378] Blackburn, *Napoleon and the Szlachta*. 4.

easy proposition.[379] Finally, the Duchy, and the 19th century in general, worked to reinforce the power of the magnates since their estates were diversified and possessed more resources, while the ravages of war and partition damaged smaller landholders the most of all (due to market disruptions and peasant deaths, mainly). This caused the magnates to persist as politically-relevant variables far beyond the point where the shocks of the age should have broken noble power.[380]

When Napoleon's power was broken and Alexander finally made a commitment to the revival of Poland, his strategy for appeasing the *szlachta* followed the same guidelines as the Duchy of Warsaw. In addition to the remarkable grants of liberal rights and autonomy enshrined in the 1815 Constitution, Alexander was careful to ensure the continued economic and social dominance of the *szlachta*. Towards this end, the Code Napoleon was largely retained, and the position of the *szlachta* vis-a-vis the peasantry was even strengthened. The 1818 establishment of the post of mayor of the rural commune further imbued landholders with powers over the peasantry, by providing them with the capability to restrict peasant movements.[381] Even as political autonomy was frequently violated in practice by Tsarist officials, the economic position of the *szlachta* was unthreatened between 1815 and 1830. These economic privileges and the expectation that they would continue indefinitely even affected the policies undertaken by the insurgent government in 1830-1, which rejected any attempt to revisit the status quo on landholding.[382] *Szlachta* unwillingness to countenance any kind of land reform is in fact one of the most compelling explanations for why Poland was unable to muster the

[379] Ibid. 34.
[380] Ibid. 128-9.
[381] R. F. Leslie, "Politics and Economics in Congress Poland, 1815-1864," *Past & Present* no. 8 (November 1955): 43–63. 44-5.
[382] Ibid. 45-6.

consistent force to throw off Tsarist rule, as the *szlachta* gentry were essentially expecting the bulk of the fighting forces (i.e. peasants) to fight for an independent Poland that offered them little in the way of socioeconomic improvement.

The arc of time from the foundation of the Congress Kingdom in 1815 to the eruption of the 1830 November insurrection was ultimately an unstable arrangement between a Tsar unwilling to brook real opposition and a Polish elite strata that assumed that the 1815 constitution conferred real liberal rights. The *szlachta* viewed it as a potential rebirth of the golden freedoms they had enjoyed under the Nobles' Republic and looked forward to the time when Poland would be politically reunited with the Lithuanian lands. At the height of this period of optimism, Alexander himself mooted the possibility that such a constitutional design may be extended to the empire as a whole, instructing Novosiltsev to construct the 'Charter for the Fundamental Law of the Russian Empire,' which borrowed liberally from the 1815 document.[383] Although the *szlachta* were unhappy with the conduct of individuals like Constantine, Zajaczek, and Novosiltsev in how they managed the Congress Kingdom, they still generally supported the Russian connection and saw it as the path to the realization of Polish goals. Even after Alexander demonstrated he was not interested in a truly liberal political outcome, many of the *szlachta* came to support Constantine as he became more protective of Polish autonomy in the mid-1820s. However, it seems that Alexander's advisors were correct in viewing the Polish experiment as an inevitable failure, as it barely outlived Alexander himself and created a situation that would eventually end in its termination after the insurrection of 1830-1.

[383] Thackeray, *Antecedents of Revolution*. 58.

As in the Baltics, the *szlachta* were the most consequential power-holders in Poland-Lithuania, and the Tsarist government needed their compliance to successfully integrate Poland-Lithuania into the empire. The *szlachta* were more numerous than their Baltic German equivalents (and indeed, more numerous than most European nobilities), but as Lukowski notes these numbers masked the dominance of only about a dozen magnate families, who controlled most of Poland's economic wealth and by extension the political affairs of the commonwealth (notably, the magnates were referred to as "little kings," indicating the extent of their power and influence).[384] Magnate dominance of political and economic life in Poland-Lithuania would begin to change in the 19th century as other groups in the population expanded their influence, but at the time of incorporation they remained the most important political players. The political privileges of the *szlachta*, the "golden freedoms," were entrenched in both law and custom, but this did not prevent external rivals from interfering in Poland's domestic politics. The divisions among the magnates opened Poland-Lithuania up to external influence, and as a result of the waning political fortunes of the commonwealth, found itself increasingly within Russia's sphere of influence after 1709.[385] Rival magnates would routinely petition the Tsarist throne for support and protection against competitors, thus undermining the sovereignty and capabilities of the commonwealth up until its dissolution in the partitions. However, this successful tactic of divide-and-conquer did not guarantee that the *szlachta* would act as loyal, local clients of Tsarist power. Unlike the other borderlands, Poland's history as a great power and the expectations of political privilege

[384] Jerzy T. Lukowski, "Towards Partition: Polish Magnates and Russian Intervention in Poland During the Early Reign of Stanislaw August Poniatowski," *The Historical Journal* 28, no. 3 (September 1, 1985): 557–574. 558.
[385] Ibid. 560.

possessed by the *szlachta* made it virtually impossible for the Tsarist government to conciliate the *szlachta*. The interruption of the Napoleonic era and the failed promises of the Congress Kingdom only helped to solidify the increasingly oppositionist character of the *szlachta*.

Conclusion

The incorporation of the Western Borderlands into the Tsarist Empire occurred in a context of geopolitical competition with external powers, but the character of incorporation was largely dependent on the cohesion and organization of local elites and their willingness (or unwillingness) to cooperate with Tsarist authorities. This helps to account for the dramatically different arcs that each part of the borderlands followed despite similar starting points (broad grants of autonomy from the Tsarist government and attempts to conciliate the local elites). In the Baltics and Finland, the Tsarist strategy met with general success, as the Baltic Germans and the Swedish-speaking Finnish gentry were open to a collaborative relationship with the state and sought to preserve their positions vis-a-vis the peasantry. The willingness of these elites to serve the empire (the Baltic Germans mainly in the civilian bureaucracy, the Finnish elites as officers in the military bureaucracy) gave little reason for the state to revise these privileges, and Tsarist reliance on local administrators would have limited the capability for such a revision in the first place. The cooperative relationship between the autocracy and the Baltic and Finnish elites will also help to account for these regions' ability to weather centralization efforts, which will be discussed in the subsequent chapter. Baltic and Finnish privileges would remain largely intact until the reign of Alexander III.

In contrast, Tsarist incorporation strategy was much less successful in Hetman Ukraine and Poland, if success is defined as cultivating effective local clients. In Ukraine, the Cossack *starshyna* failed to play this intermediary role, because although they controlled the governing institutions of the Hetmanate, those governing institutions did not have enough practical reach over the whole of Cossackdom. As we will see in the next chapter, Tsarist imposition of pro-government Hetmans further undermined Cossack unity until Catherine II simply decided that the institutions of the Hetmanate were unnecessary for Tsarist control of Ukraine. The *starshyna* were willing to act as Tsarist clients, but lacked the numbers and capacity to actually deliver stability and control over their territory. Conversely, Poland had a large and well-organized gentry in the *szlachta*, but that gentry was ill-disposed towards cooperation with the Tsarist government. The partitions of Poland in the late 18th century had embittered many of the *szlachta* towards the partition powers, and had short-circuited Polish efforts to reinvigorate the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth through political reform. Moreover, the *szlachta*'s long tradition of noble liberty and governance made it less likely that they would submit to autocratic authority than the other elites of the borderlands. The incorporation of Congress Poland tried to strike a balance between Polish expectations and the preservation of Tsarist supremacy, but it failed abysmally and produced lingering conflict.

In all four border regions, the Tsarist government operated according to the logic of offering side-payments to secure reliable compliance and loyalty from internal elites. In order to achieve this compliance, the state offered more substantial concessions than those which were given to the native Russian gentry, the dvorianstvo, primarily by

expanding the concessions from strictly economic privileges into the realm of political rights and privileges. This did not represent any high-minded approach to dealing with governance problems in the borderlands, but was instead a tacit acknowledgment of the state's incapacity to directly rule those territories through central administrative structures. Given this opportunity, the strength and cohesion of the local elites, as well as their general orientation towards the Tsarist state, dictated how successfully the regions were at entrenching and defending these privileges. In the case of Hetman Ukraine, the elites were too weak; in the case of Poland, too divided and hostile. The Baltics and Finland conversely offered relatively cohesive and skilled elites that were able to defend their political position through native institutions. As such, Tsarist political strategy combined with the strength of the local elite dictated the character of the early stages of incorporation and set the stage for the later struggles that would define Tsarist efforts to centralize the empire. The next chapter explores these dynamics in-depth, focusing on how the ratchet effect caused by external events (oftentimes military conflicts) put pressure on the borderland regions and their elites to defend their niche in the empire.

CHAPTER V

CENTRALIZATION AND REPRESSION IN THE BORDERLANDS

The process of incorporating the Western Borderlands into the Tsarist Empire reflected the logic of a decentralized, multi-ethnic political system. Although nominally centralized and autocratic, in practice the Tsarist state tolerated a high degree of regional autonomy so long as local elites pledged imperial loyalty and were able to deliver social stability. This policy carried over from the past of Muscovy, as cultivating local clients proved to be less costly than imposing direct administrative rule, and the state in most cases would not have been able to muster the resources and personnel for such rule in the first place. The policy also served a specific geopolitical purpose, as expansion allowed the state to create a ring of buffer territories to provide some breathing space from external rivals such as Sweden, Prussia, or the Ottoman Empire. However, shifting geopolitical pressures guaranteed that this arrangement could not be a permanent one. While the Tsarist government pursued its traditional policy of co-opting local elites and indirectly managing territories, European rivals were moving towards a more centralized, bureaucratic form of rule that proved more adept at extracting resources from their populations. As a result, the Tsarist state was faced with increasing military demands that sparked a gradual, yet inconsistent, process of adaptation where the Tsarist state was reformed to more closely approximate centralized, well-ordered nation states.

In the borderlands, this political transformation proceeded over the course of a couple centuries, with its point of origin actually predating the incorporation of later territories (such as Poland or Finland). The effort to centralize control over the borderlands commenced with Peter I's and Catherine II's policies in Ukraine. The Great

Northern War with Sweden helped to instigate a restructuring of Tsarist governance, as Peter sought to emulate the political structures of Sweden, Prussia, and other European states. This newfound notion of the state's interest reoriented the state's relationship with Hetman Ukraine, which had previously been founded on a traditional, reciprocal suzerainty, and undermined the political autonomy of the Hetmanate (until its eventual dissolution under Catherine II). In contrast, the centralization of the Baltics and Finland was less successful and only ambivalently pursued by St. Petersburg. The local elites in these regions proved more powerful and adept than the Cossack *starshyna* in protecting their interests, and Tsarist institutions (such as the Governor-General) often reinforced this autonomy. There is clear evidence of increasing administrative centralization in these regions from Catherine II to Alexander II, but it falls significantly short of the absorption of the Hetmanate into the imperial core. Finally, the case of Poland-Lithuania occupies an uneasy time frame, as it was incorporated when the state had already begun to pivot from the traditional imperial mode of governance to a state-centered mode of governance. Thus, efforts to co-opt the Polish *szlachta* through concessions of autonomy occurred at the same time as efforts to limit or undermine that autonomy, breeding a divisive conflict in the Congress Kingdom. After the Tsarist balancing act in Poland failed, the state resolutely moved towards an aggressive policy of centralization that did little to ameliorate the conflict with the Polish populace.

The process of centralization that occurred in the Tsarist Empire mirrors the general dynamic identified by Hintze, Tilly, and others.[386] In response to external military threats, the state attempted to extend its social control with the purpose of more

[386] Hintze, *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze*. Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol eds. *Bringing the State Back In*.

efficiently extracting resources from its population. This process was complicated by the state's reliance on traditional landed estates, which could not offer the kind of internal cohesion and efficient delivery of resources that characterized a complex, articulated bureaucracy.[387] This complication was the most salient in the Western Borderlands, where the state had to rely on local expertise and management due to its own incapacity for direct rule. The state remained the most potent force when it came to bargaining with the local elites in the borderlands, but it only accrued the power to extend its domination gradually and unevenly, leaving the borderland elites with substantial leverage when bargaining with the state.[388] The greatest opportunities to extend direct rule characteristically emerged during periods of military conflict or rivalry, where the state's capacity for centralization mirrors the 'ratchet effect' that Thies discusses with reference to modern Latin American states.[389] As such, the most important moments of centralization in the late Tsarist Empire were during events like the Great Northern War, regular conflicts with the Ottoman Empire, the Napoleonic Wars, and the Crimean War. As this chapter details, however, these shocks were often insufficient to completely remake borderland arrangements, and the ability of the local elites to fend off the consequences of the 'ratchet effect' generally came down to the constellation of elite power discussed previously.

The differing constellations of elite power help to explain the different borderland policies at specific moments in time. The most striking feature of the state-borderland relationship was not the fact that the state sought to extend its power (which was to be

[387] See Poggi, *The State*.
[388] Levi, *Of Rule and Revenue*.
[389] Cameron G. Thies, "War, Rivalry, and State Building in Latin America," *American Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 3 (July 1, 2005): 451–465.

expected), but that at the same moment in time it was often abridging one region's power while it reinforced another. Thus, at the same moment Ukrainian autonomy was being smashed by Peter I during the Great Northern War, the Baltic regions of Livland and Estland were first receiving their generous incorporation agreements. As the Baltics were forced to produce reforms of serfdom under Alexander I, Finland was achieving its separate status and Congress Poland would shortly be granted a fairly liberal constitution. During the two Polish insurrections of the 19th century, the other borderland regions were also subjected to some centralizing impulses, but these impulses were very mild in the cases of the Baltics and Finland, and in the latter case autonomy was even extended following the second Polish insurrection of 1863-4. The fact that treatment of the borderlands differed is not surprising, but the fact that they were treated so differently at exactly the same moment in time indicates the presence of an intervening variable that served to modify or influence Tsarist policies. I posit here that the intervening variable continued to be the strength and orientation of the local elites, and that this variable was strong enough to moderate the 'ratchet effect' observed during periods of military conflict.

The developments detailed in this chapter offer a strong test of my theoretical contribution to theories of direct and indirect rule, and in general these developments vindicate my modifications to the theory offered by Gerring, Ziblatt, et al. Although the power and orientation of local elites in the borderlands were crucial to the incorporation agreements discussed in chapter three, the Tsarist state offered relatively similar concessions in all the cases, with important exceptions during the Polish-Lithuanian partitions. However, the geopolitical pressures that sparked processes of centralization and state-building offered the first major challenge to borderland elite privilege, and the

power and orientation of those elites provides the most compelling explanation for the unevenness of Tsarist policies. These variables also serve to explain the Polish-Lithuanian case, which is otherwise an outlier in the model offered by Gerring, Ziblatt, et al.

The Dissolution of Hetman Ukraine

If the 17th century was the century of incorporation for the Hetmanate, the 18th century was the century of administrative centralization on the part of the Tsarist state. As Orest Subtelny argues, during the 17th century there were real limitations on the Tsar's power, and so in the case of Ukraine the empire had to resort to reciprocal arrangements and compromises with the local elites.[390] Even though the Tsarist state sought to revise these agreements to its benefit when it had the opportunity to do so, this was limited by the geopolitical importance of Hetman Ukraine and the relative parity of military power between the Cossacks and the imperial forces. After the Treaty of Pereiaslav in 1654, the work of coordinating Tsarist rule with the Hetmanate was entrusted to the Malorossikii Prikaz, which existed until its abolition in 1717. The Prikaz's function was mostly restricted to communication, information gathering, supervision of Russian military garrisons, and consular activity. Given its small staff, it was not able to play a more aggressive role in bringing Ukraine into the imperial orbit and indeed that was not its purpose. The existence of the Prikaz actually served to reinforce the distinction between the imperial government and the institutions of the Hetmanate, in a manner consistent

[390] Subtelny, “Russia and the Ukraine.” 9.

with the guarantee of Ukrainian autonomy.[391] It was only in the 18th century, with Hetman Ivan Mazepa's "treason" and Peter I's response, that this basic relationship would be transformed.

The precipitating event for the changes in the Russia-Ukraine relationship was the Great Northern War fought between the Tsarist Empire and Sweden. The pressures brought on by the war acted as a major stimulus for changes in the structure of the Tsarist state under Peter I (mainly so that the Tsar possessed greater leverage to extract resources and manpower from the population to go towards war efforts), but it also had a centralizing effect on the relationship between the imperial center and the peripheral borderlands. For the Cossacks, the war brought on demands that struck at the core of the reciprocal relationship between the Hetmanate and the empire. The Cossack military units were expected to fight beyond Ukraine's borders for the first time, submit themselves to Russian and German commanders, and conform to a mode of military discipline that clashed with Cossack traditions. There was also the possibility that the traditional Cossack military formations would be disbanded and reorganized along traditional regimental lines.[392] However disquieting these changes were to the Cossacks, they were not the cause of the rupture between the Hetmanate and the empire. The event that triggered Mazepa's defection to the Swedes was Peter I's refusal to aid the Ukrainians against the hated Poles. Since the Hetman viewed the relationship between Moscow and the Hetmanate as a relationship based on protection, the removal of this promise of

[391] Subtelny provides a good summary of the functions of the Prikaz in Ibid. 4-6.
[392] Orest Subtelny, “Mazepa, Peter I, and the Question of Treason.,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 2, no. 2 (June 1, 1978): 158–183. 167.

protection was seen as ample reason to withdraw from the relationship and seek new allies.[393]

Peter's response was predictable, and once again emphasized the different interpretations that each side attributed to the original agreement at Pereiaslav. Peter justified the command for the Hetmanate to leave itself defenseless in order to aid the war effort as a product of the "common interests" of the empire, a justification that represented a shift to the logic of the state commanding the loyalty of all of its inhabitants.[394] Conversely, Mazepa still viewed the compact between the Tsar and the Hetmanate as a submission to Russian suzerainty in return for territorial protection, as a reciprocal arrangement even if one of the parties was a senior partner and the other a junior, so to speak. Based on this understanding, it is actually surprising that Mazepa did not break with Russia sooner, which may be explained by the Hetman's attempt to come to some sort of understanding with the Tsar.[395] In any case, reprisal from the imperial center was swift, as Russian military regiments conducted a "reign of terror" in the Hetmanate to root out "Mazepists," using the methods of property seizure, exile, and even execution.[396] Peter also used the "treason" as a pretext to undermine Ukrainian autonomy, replacing Mazepa with the more pliant Ivan Skoropadsky and making the confirmation of Ukrainian privileges contingent upon loyalty to the Tsarist state.[397] With this new hierarchy in place, Peter moved to extract as much as he could from the Hetmanate and limit its autonomy. This included the introduction of regulations on trade routes, state

[393] Subtelny, *Ukraine*. 163-4.
[394] Subtelny, "Mazepa, Peter I, and the Question of Treason." 180, 182.
[395] G. M. Hamburg, "Imperial Entanglements: Two New Histories of Russia's Western and Southern Borderlands," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9, no. 2 (2008): 407–431. 412.
[396] Subtelny, "Russia and the Ukraine." 11.
[397] Subtelny, "Mazepa, Peter I, and the Question of Treason." 180.

monopolies, tariffs, and import-export taxes. Cossacks were conscripted not for military service but to serve on public works projects in the imperial core, including the construction of the new capital of St. Petersburg. Administratively, the Malorossiskaya Kollegia (MK) was tasked with overseeing the governing functions of the Hetmanate.[398]

The MK replaced the Malorossikii Prikaz (MP) and brought greater resources to bear on the supervision of governmental activity in the Hetmanate. While the MP had restricted itself to information gathering and oversight of Russian regiments, the MK was able to bypass the governmental institutions of the Hetmanate (which in turn had to have its orders countersigned by the MK), and it could overturn virtually any decision taken by the Hetmanate.[399] The Cossacks Officers Council, which had begun to transform itself into an organ of interest representation in the Hetmanate under Mazepa, was firmly neutered and placed under the guidance of Russia.[400] To guarantee the reliability of the Hetman himself (to prevent the emergence of another Mazepa), the Hetman's residence was moved to Hlukhiv, which was both closer to the Russian border and the base of the MK, making oversight of the Hetman easier.[401] Finally, even before the formal abolition of the Hetmanate by Catherine II, the election of a new Hetman was contingent on Russian approval, and the office was often left vacant during the 18th century. Even when there was an acting Hetman, he was answerable to a Russian bureaucrat tasked with approving his decisions, and many government functions were in fact rerouted to Russian and not Ukrainian jurisdiction.[402]

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[398] Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy*. 70-75.
[399] Subtelny, "Russia and the Ukraine." 12.
[400] Okinshevich, *Ukrainian Society and Government, 1648-1781*. 83-4.
[401] Subtelny, "Russia and the Ukraine." 13.
[402] Okinshevich, *Ukrainian Society and Government, 1648-1781*. 73.

These changes assured control over the hierarchy of the Hetmanate, but it was still necessary to extend control over the Cossack rank and file which had provided the base of support for Mazepa. Towards this end, Peter implemented the reorganization of the Cossack regiments and placed them under the control of a Russian commander. Traditional methods of electing Cossack officers were altered to incorporate Tsarist approval, and the Tsarist government took the opportunity to install Russian or foreign officers that were considered more likely to be loyal to imperial interests.[403] To bleed more resources out of the Hetmanate, responsibility for the upkeep of regiments based on Ukrainian soil (mostly Russian) passed to the Hetmanate, seriously straining the budget of the government. During the 18th century, but before the abolition of the Hetmanate, Russia had as many as 17 regiments (plus auxiliaries) deployed within Ukraine, under the command of the Governor-General. This represented a fairly significant threat to the Ukrainian client, and an increase over the number of soldiers based there during the 17th century (when the Cossacks in fact won several skirmishes with Russian troops).[404] In addition, Cossacks were used as a labor source for the enterprising Peter, helping to construct not only the new capital of St. Petersburg, but also thousands of men to the construction of the Don-Volga canal in 1716, military fortifications in the Caucasus in 1718, the Ladoga canal in 1721-2. The mortality rate for these labor regiments averaged around 30% and was as high as 50% in some.[405]

After 1727, the Hetmanate enjoyed a period of renewed autonomy, though not without some losses. Control over the Hetmanate's finances was passed to Petersburg and there were instances of interference in Hetman affairs, but until Catherine II, the Tsars in

[403] Subtelny, "Russia and the Ukraine." 13.
[404] LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831*. 113-4.
[405] Subtelny, "Russia and the Ukraine." 15.

Petersburg were ambivalent or vacillated when it came to supervising Ukraine. Ukraine enjoyed the height of its autonomy under Tsarina Elizabeth. This would cease for good with the accession of Catherine II in 1762.[406] When Catherine came to power, Hetman Rozumovsky was the head of the Hetmanate and had been since 1750, though in reality his rule was compromised by the MK and an appointed Russian resident. Despite Rozumovsky's previously close relationship with Catherine, this did not translate into more autonomy for the Hetmanate, although this was the goal of both Rozumovsky and the Ukrainian Hlukhiv Council. The clash between Russian centralization and Ukrainian autonomy came to its conclusion in the different programs sought by the Hlukhiv Council and Catherine's goals for the empire. Where the Council sought to restore traditional prerogatives in fiscal and political government for the Hetmanate, Catherine wanted to see rule over the territory of the empire standardized. This contradiction in goals in part prompted the resignation of the Hetman and the ultimate dissolution of the Hetmanate.[407]

The final destruction of the Hetmanate proceeded in several steps. The first was the abolition of the office of the Hetman in 1764, when Rozumovsky resigned and was replaced by Governor-General Rumiantsev so that Ukraine was administered in a way comparable to other border territories. Rumiantsev was tasked with bringing order to the Cossacks and bringing Ukraine in line with Catherine's goals for the empire as a whole. As part of these changes, Rumiantsev abrogated the traditional Cossack right to elect their own officers, introduced Russian military discipline into the ranks, and punished those who violated this discipline with either whippings or the stripping of Cossack rank

[406] Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy*. 70-5.
[407] Ibid. 101-2.

and being reduced to a peasant.[408] During the height of Rumiantsev's power (1765-1769), he was very successful in furthering Catherine's centralist goals, although he failed to remain in her favor beyond this period. The Cossack Host was finally integrated into the rest of the Russian military infrastructure, a goal that had been long resisted by the independent traditions of the Cossacks, and free Cossacks outside of the Host were gradually reduced to the status of state peasants. This full introduction of Russian-style serfdom served as a sop to the Ukrainian elites, who were at this time attempting to gain all the rights and privileges of the Russian *dvorianstvo*, which would later be extended by the Charter to the Nobility (see previous chapter).[409]

The next step was to bring the more recalcitrant Cossacks hosts into line (in addition to the Zaporozhian Host, Russia had several other Cossack hosts in greater Ukraine and the Black Sea area). In the latter half of the 18th century, Cossack uprisings and mutinies were common throughout the Ukrainian lands, including both the Hetmanate and the land of the Zaporozhian Sich (the stronghold of the Cossack host). Russian troops were often necessary for violently quashing these risings, which sought to reclaim Cossack privileges and strike out against the perceived oppressors, the Russians. The unrest in the Zaporozhian Host especially was problematic, as it threatened Russian security during a war with Turkey. Catherine waited to deal with the problem until the Turkish War was over, at which point the Zaporozhian Sich was destroyed at her order and the Host dispersed.[410] The Pugachev rebellion, which was either outwardly or implicitly supported by various groups of Cossacks within the empire, was a key trigger for the change in Tsarist policy towards the Cossack hosts, leading to more restrictions on

[408] Ibid. 115-116.
[409] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*. 67-9.
[410] Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy*. 192-5.

Cossack military formations, Russian supervision, and the dissolution and punishment of the more recalcitrant groups.[411] The reason behind Russia's willingness to take firm action against the Cossack hosts had to do with the shifting geopolitical interests in the region. Between the absorption of Poland during the Polish partitions (which shifted the imperial borders) and the decline of the Tatar threat (the Crimean Tatars were defeated and incorporated by 1783), the Cossacks were no longer needed by the Tsarist state to serve as a military buffer against hostile neighbors. Between the removal of these threats and the deterioration of the Cossack hosts (due to the defection of the *starshyna*), these traditional Cossack military formations became a liability for the empire and were therefore expendable.[412] The end of the war with Turkey and the outbreak of the Pugachev rebellion simply provided a convenient pretext to carry out the changes.

The final step was the dissolution of the institutions of the Hetmanate itself, abrogating the agreement in the Treaty of Pereiaslav. The institutions of the Hetmanate stood in the way of Catherine's goals of creating a standardized, well-ordered imperial state, so they became the logical targets of the government before the restructuring of regional governments in the early 1780s. Hetman officials attempted to prevent this outcome by petitioning for the restoration of the office of the Hetman as a hereditary office (since this was seen as a way to guarantee more stability in the Hetmanate), but Catherine predictably rejected this request before the Hetmanate's abolition in 1781.[413] After the abolition, reforms enacted in St. Petersburg sought to replace the function of the institutions without reinforcing Ukrainian autonomy. The Statute of the Provinces promulgated under Catherine II was intended to implement the goals of a well-ordered

[411] Ibid. 199-201.
[412] LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831*. 148-9.
[413] Okinshevich, *Ukrainian Society and Government, 1648-1781*. 106-9.

state by fundamentally restructuring regional and local government. It divided the empire into standardized regions under a governor-general, a Treasury Board that oversaw finances, and urban and rural police forces that were tasked with implementing the Police Ordinance of 1782.[414] The Ukrainian Orthodox Church was also absorbed into the broader Russian Orthodox Church, despite initially possessing autonomy from the spiritual regulations under Peter I. Church officials became "virtual state employees" and the number of those employed in church structures, as well as financial administration, were strictly controlled by the imperial center.[415] For all intents and purposes, the more extensive autonomy that the Hetmanate had enjoyed ceased to exist, as the goals of Tsarist centralization were achieved more thoroughly in Ukraine than in the other borderland regions.

At the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century, Tsarist imperial bureaucracy introduced military discipline to Ukraine as a means of controlling the region. Conscription was enacted in 1797 and some of Arakcheev's military colonies were based on Ukrainian soil. The division among civilian bureaucrats mirrored this martial hierarchy and this extended to the Third Section once Nicholas I established the organization. However, the state could ill-afford extensive personnel in Ukraine, so despite this outward appearance of discipline, the relatively small number of officials could not adequately oversee all government operations in Ukraine.[416] The government's centralist views were not restricted to reactionaries, and in fact found an echo in the political program of the radical Decembrist Pestel, who thought that Ukraine should not have an independent existence from Russia (though Poland was afforded autonomy in his

[414] Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy*. 202-4.
[415] Ibid. 233.
[416] Subtelny, *Ukraine*. 203-6.

plans).[417] The lack of Tsarist personnel in Ukraine did limit the government's ability to impose policies, however. Up until the mid-19th century, Ukraine retained some of its sources of autonomy, however minor. Under Paul I, some government functions were restored, but his brief reign guaranteed that these policies did not have a chance to consolidate. Ukrainian law was not entirely superseded by Russian law until 1842, and Madgeburg Law operated in some towns until 1835.[418] After this point, however, Ukraine was essentially another part of the imperial core.

Inconsistent Centralization in the Baltics and Finland

One of the first efforts to change the status quo in the Baltic territories came during the reign of Catherine II, when the Tsarist government pursued mild administrative Russification in the borderlands. Here the distinction between types of Russification is important, as Russification efforts in the late 19th century possessed a dramatically different character than Catherine's reforms. As Thaden and others postulate, there were three different types of Russification present during the period of Tsarist rule: unplanned or voluntary Russification, administrative Russification, and cultural Russification.[419] The first is not important for our purposes, but the latter two types indicate a fundamentally different philosophy of governance, with the more vigorous cultural Russification of the 19th century threatening the traditional imperial foundation of dynastic loyalty. The object of Catherine's reforms was to harmonize peripheral territories into the administrative structure of the empire, while still leaving most cultural

[417] Ibid. 209.
[418] Okinshevich, *Ukrainian Society and Government, 1648-1781*. 136.
[419] Edward Thaden, et al, *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1981). 8-9.

rights and privileges (such as religion or language) untouched.[420] The closest that Catherine came to cultural Russification was in her efforts to integrate the native elites more tightly into the Tsarist administration and inject a set of mores more conducive to the empire, but as Marc Raeff notes, this can be considered consistent with the objective of enhancing dynastic loyalty at the expense of ethnic ties.[421]

The pressures exerted on the Baltic territories by Alexander I assumed a different character than the provincial reforms sought by Catherine II. Rather than attempting to force the Baltics to integrate with the rest of the empire, Alexander sought progressive reforms in these territories in the hopes that such reforms could serve as a foundation for similar reforms throughout the empire. Alexander was mainly interested in achieving agrarian reforms and peasant emancipation, as he considered serfdom to be a serious potential problem for the empire, and success in Livland and Estland could provide useful experience and feedback for Russian officials interested in progressive reform.[422] The beginning of agrarian reforms in the Baltics, in 1802, were intended to preempt and prevent wider-reaching reforms, and targeted some of the most egregious abuses of the system, such as the uncontrolled power of the landlords and the lack of protection for serf families.[423] Subsequent measures attempted to further chip away at the edifice of landholder power in the Baltics, but predictably the Baltic Germans staunchly resisted such changes, as they challenged the precarious position of the borderland elite situated between the imperial authority and a potentially hostile peasantry. After the Napoleonic Wars and additional measures in 1804 and 1809, Baltic landowners concluded that some

[420] Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*. 157-9.
[421] Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State*. 248-9.
[422] Susan P McCaffray, "Confronting Serfdom in the Age of Revolution: Projects for Serf Reform in the Time of Alexander I," *The Russian Review* 64, no. 1 (January 1, 2005): 1–21.
[423] Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*. 184-5.

form of emancipation was inevitable and sought to limit the extent of its economic impact by approving modest emancipation laws before more stringent ones emerged from the Tsar himself.[424]

Alexander's preferred solution to the emancipation problem was to conduct an official inventory of landholdings in the Baltics, assess the quality of the holdings, and come to an arrangement where the traditional customary and legal land rights would be retained by both the gentry and the peasantry.[425] This approach was central to the 1809 Livland proposal and was largely modeled on the manner in which landlord-tenant relations had been managed in Poland, the idea being that peasants would be adequately protected under the terms of such an arrangement. Given their traditional predominance (which was in fact more absolute than among Russian landholders), the Baltic Germans fiercely opposed such a resolution and instead proposed their own emancipation programs during a time when Alexander's thoughts were more concerned with foreign policy than governance of the borderlands. As a result, the Baltic Germans effectively controlled the terms of peasant emancipation in Livland and Estland (and eventually Kurland), leading to a state of affairs highly favorable to their own interests and damaging to peasant interests.[426] Unlike later emancipations in the empire, the Baltic emancipations reverted all land back to the control of the landowner, making the former serfs dependent on the landowner for continued tenancy. They became autonomous and free subjects, but at great economic cost.[427] Alexander deplored this outcome, and efforts were made to revive some of the protections inherent in the 1804 legislation and to

[424] Ibid, 190-1.
[425] McCaffray, "Confronting Serfdom in the Age of Revolution." 7-8.
[426] Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870*. 18-19; See also Thaden, et al, *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914*. 98.
[427] Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*. 194.

promote hereditary tenure for the peasants, but he nevertheless accepted the *fait accompli* offered to him and even attempted to make the best use possible of the example.[428] When Kurland modeled its own emancipation on the terms of the Livland emancipation, Alexander ratified the change despite his dissatisfaction. Agrarian reform would be revisited in the Baltics under later Tsars, such as when available tracts of land were granted to peasants under measures in 1849 and 1856, but for the moment at least the position of the Baltic Germans remained ascendant.[429]

During the same period, Alexander also considered broader reforms within the empire that would produce significant regional autonomy, modeled closely to that offered to the newly acquired Finland and Congress Poland.[430] These ideas were mooted in a context where Alexander had been exploring the possibility of constructing a constitutional order for the empire as a whole, and would have represented a withdrawal from the traditional autocracy. Men like Speransky and Novosiltsev favored a federal solution to the empire's problem of governance, a preference that would also be shared by later dissidents such as the Decembrists (though not Pestel, given the Jacobin republic he envisioned as Russia's future). These ideas, however, came into conflict with those in the government who held a more conservative position concerning royal authority (and indeed the conflict was present in Alexander himself), and the plans were never acted upon. They were rejected absolutely by Nicholas after he came to power in 1825, since the new Tsar saw them as militating against the unity of the empire's administration and the authority of the monarchy. The monarchic centralism preferred by Nicholas and his advisors served as a counterstroke to the experimentation with reform during the

[428] McCaffray, "Confronting Serfdom in the Age of Revolution." 9-10.
[429] Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*. 218.
[430] LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831*. 211.

Alexandrine period, though the extent of this centralism is often overstated given the limited resources available to the state. The gendarmes put into place throughout Russia in the wake of the Napoleonic War offered a foundation for some of Nicholas' schemes of governance, and these were later converted into branches of the Third Department, but the manpower available was inadequate given the tasks at hand.[431]

The government of Nicholas I is paradoxical insofar as the Baltics are concerned. As indicated in a previous chapter, Nicholas' reign was baptized by the convulsion of the Decembrist rebellion and its subsequent suppression, and this created in Nicholas a tendency towards conservatism, control over dissent, and stricter imperial oversight. In the atmosphere of Petersburg, the policies of the new Tsar proved stifling, as members of the intelligentsia were harassed by the Third Section and frequently subjected to needlessly harsh punishment. However, at least until the European revolutions of 1848, Nicholas was also tentatively interested in the possibility of gradual reforms as being a potential long-term solution to the problems that gave rise to the Decembrist revolt. As such, Nicholas sought legal reforms (employing Speransky to produce an empire-wide legal code), educational reforms under the ministry of Uvarov, and frequently tried to address the festering problem of serfdom with countless unofficial committees.[432] This duality also manifested itself in the administration of the borderland territories. A centralizer at heart (the amount of oversight that Nicholas personally participated in is testament to this fact), Nicholas was inconsistent in his treatment of the Baltics. On one hand, some administrative Russification was attempted, as the unity of the imperial administration was consistent with the ideology of the Official Nationality promoted by

[431] For some information concerning the regional gendarmes, see Ibid. 187-8.
[432] McCaffray, "Confronting Serfdom in the Age of Revolution." 19.

the Tsar. On the other hand, Nicholas was inclined to protect the traditional privileges of the Baltic Germans out of the same conservatism that infused his administration of the Russian core, but also because the Baltics proved to be loyal where the Russian gentry proved to be treacherous. Dynastic loyalty remained a value of central importance during Nicholas' reign.

Whatever momentum had been established for Russification in the early and middle years of Nicholas' rule waned during his last decade in power. Between 1845 and 1865, imperial influence in the Baltic territories was at a relative low point, which helped the local elites to carve out more autonomy. The source of this declining influence can be traced to the policies coming from Nicholas, which oscillated between strict Russification and lenience, and the inability or even unwillingness of imperial officials to enforce said policies.[433] Nicholas himself was torn on the issue, as he saw the Baltic Germans as loyal servitors to the Tsar (with many prominent Baltic Germans serving as high officials, including the chief of the gendarme and the Third Section, Alexander Benckendorff), and was unwilling to take his ruling ideology to its logical conclusion. This can be seen by Nicholas' treatment of the Stackelberg-Khanykov commission. The commission, convened between 1845-8, sought to challenge the administrative autonomy of the Baltics. Nicholas disbanded it when he thought it was too one-sided and its recommendations were shelved until they were rendered redundant by the municipal reforms of the 1870s.[434] In fact, Nicholas anticipated what would become one of the primary schisms between Russian publicists who favored a more robust ethnic nationalism and those who still adhered to the traditional respect for dynastic loyalty

[433] Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870*. 188-90.
[434] Thaden, et al, *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914*. 118-9.

when he ordered the publicist Yuri Samarin to be jailed after Samarin published a polemic against Baltic German privileges. Nicholas' reasoning for the punishment was that Samarin had acted unwisely in besmirching a group that had so well-served the interests of the empire.[435] Nicholas was not unique in defending the position of the Baltic Germans. Alexander II was similarly critical of polemics against the Baltics in the press in the 1860s, especially ones that compared their position to that of the Poles. Alexander thought that their service clearly distinguished them from the Poles.[436]

Finland followed an arc similar to the Baltic territories, although it enjoyed even greater autonomy than the Baltic Germans and faced fewer attempts to circumscribe that autonomy before the late 19th century. When Finland was incorporated into the empire in 1809, it was granted concessions similar to the Baltics, though it did not receive a constitution like Poland would in 1815. Finnish insecurity regarding the lack of a written constitution led to lobbying efforts that were rewarded with more favorable local governing institutions (under the control of Finns rather than Russians) and Russia also made the significant concession of appending Old Finland (under Russian control before the incorporation of Finland) to the Grand Duchy.[437] As will be discussed in greater detail below, the Russian political institutions tasked to administrative control over Finland (primarily the Governor-General) oftentimes worked to reinforce local autonomy, or were otherwise ineffectual. During Nicholas I's reign, there were a couple efforts to expand Tsarist control over the Grand Duchy, such as the appointment of Arsenii Zakrevsky as Governor-General and tighter political control during the 1848 European revolutions and the Crimean War, but these efforts were temporary and generally

[435] Monas, *The Third Section; Police and Society in Russia Under Nicholas I*. 264.
[436] Thaden, et al, *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914*. 126.
[437] Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*. 78-9.

reverted back to the status quo after the situation became settled.[438] As such, Finland was never subjected to the kind of centralization that was employed in Ukraine or Poland, at least until the accession of Alexander III and the rise of Russian nationalism, and by extension, Russification.

During the 1860s, Finland's position in the empire seesawed in response to events outside of its control, whether the second Polish revolt of 1863 or the attempted assassination of Alexander II in 1866. However, unlike the Baltics, Alexander was generally more tolerant of Finnish autonomy and willing to consider additional reforms, although these reforms were delayed by the onset of the Polish revolt. In the early 1860s, Finnish public opinion became restive towards the empire over the Tsar's dithering about reforms. Some protests broke out, including a street demonstration in Helsinki by university students, and the Tsar capitulated by promising to convene the Diet (which did not happen until the 1880s). Alexander II was reputedly worried that repression might cause Finland to head down a road similar to Poland.[439] This concession proved to be tenuous, as proposed administrative reforms in the mid-1860s that may have further reinforced Finnish autonomy (explicitly recognizing constitutional and administrative rights) were shelved after the atmosphere in Petersburg became reactionary following the attempted assassination of Alexander II in 1866.[440] The hesitation concerning Finnish reforms was mostly driven by domestic events, but the Tsarist government was also concerned about the international climate prevailing after Russia's ignominious defeat in the Crimean War. One specific concern that Russia had to deal with during the latter half of the 19th century was the possibly of Swedish alignment with powers that had designs

[438] Ibid. 85, 101-2.
[439] Thaden, et al, *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914*. 367-8.
[440] Jussila, *From Grand Duchy to Modern State*. 50-1.

on Russia. Though Sweden was no longer a real power, if it aligned itself with Germany or Britain, it could provide a dangerous base of operations against Russian territory and interests.[441]

These reversals were temporary, and in the late 1860s and 1870s, Finland achieved a substantial expansion of its political and economic autonomy. In the late 1860s, Alexander confirmed the 'fundamental law' of Finland (a reference to the now mythic Porvoo Diet), guaranteeing the authority of the estates, the Diet, and Finnish political privileges.[442] Furthermore, the Parliament Act of 1869 helped to reinforce the sense that Finnish institutions existed apart from the rest of the empire. The Parliament Act of 1869 was intended to fulfill the promise made by Alexander II concerning the regular convocation of the Diet, but the law itself was intended to be conservative, and in actual practice, the Diet was delayed until 1886. Although the law was intended to only establish a framework for the Diet and a closer relationship between Finland and the imperial administration, by this time Finland had already started developing a more liberal civil society that interpreted the change as yet another indication of the growing separation between Russia and Finland.[443] Other changes also served to reinforce this separation, including an army reform in 1878 that allowed Finland to create a regiment manned and staffed by only Finns, and monetary reforms that in essence placed Finland outside of the monetary sphere of the empire. Although changes made were supposed to be harmonized with imperial laws, the actual effect was to create additional layers of difference between Finland and the imperial core.[444] By the time Alexander III moved to

[441] Thaden, et al, *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914*. 373-381.
[442] Ibid. 369.
[443] Jussila, *From Grand Duchy to Modern State*. 52.
[444] Ibid. 53-4.

reverse these reforms in the 1880s, it proved to be more difficult than in other parts of the borderlands, making Finland into a powder keg during the last couple decades of the existence of the Tsarist Empire.

The imperial institutions that carried the most importance in the Baltics and Finland were the Governors-General and branches of policing institutions like the Third Section and the gendarme. Of these two, the Governors-General generally set the tone for relations between the borderlands and Petersburg and helped to influence the level of autonomy present in the territories. The origins of the office of the Governor-General can be traced back to the reforms of Peter I, and the provincial or district *voevoda* that preceded his rule. Until the latter years of Peter's reign, substate governance in the Tsarist Empire took the form of *voevoda*, or military governors, appointed by government chanceries to oversee individual districts. There were no regional levels of governance, making central control over the provinces questionable. The 1719 reform that separated Russia into administrative regions, both on a province and sub-province level, was intended to address this deficiency of governance, with each region headed by a *voevoda* appointed by and accountable to the Tsarist Senate.[445] The retreat from the implementation of Peter's reforms after his death complicated this plan, and it wasn't until the reign of Catherine II that the imperial government once again took up the question of governance in the borderlands. Dissatisfied with the operation of regional governance, Catherine's reforms aimed to transfer many administrative tasks to the regions, and make the renamed Governors-General directly accountable to the Tsar herself (though they continued to report to the Senate concerning some administrative

[445] John P. LeDonne, "Russian Governors General, 1775-1825: Territorial or Functional Administration?," *Cahiers Du Monde Russe* 42, no. 1 (March 2001): 5–30. 10.

matters). The abolition of a substantial portion of the governing infrastructure in the imperial center and its shift in focus to the regions gave the Governors-General tremendous flexibility in how they approached their job.[446]

The newly-refurbished post of Governor-General was granted a wide scope of powers and jurisdiction in the administration and oversight of the borderlands. As John Le Donne notes, Governors-General were expected to act as an "agent of supervision" to ensure that all imperial laws and regulations were followed, to guarantee the domestic security of their region, and to oversee all other civil governors within the region.[447] The practical effect of this wide latitude was that each administrative region was ruled in a different way, with particular patterns becoming evident. The Governors-General of Moscow and Petersburg were relatively minor officials, as their authority was superseded by the Tsarist government itself, while Governors-General in regions like Belorussia, Ukraine, and the Caucasus were ruled more rigidly according to the Organic Statute of 1775.[448] On the opposite end of the spectrum, Governors-General in the Baltics and later Finland tended to preserve the autonomy of their regions, as the relatively powerful indigenous elites provided both assistance in governing the territories while resisting changes to the status quo. Although Governors-General in the Baltics were empowered to govern these regions, they were often absent, leaving Baltic assistants and collegia to follow through on provincial administration. The continued use of German as the language of administration solidified this tendency, and the Baltic Germans formed informal lobbies in Petersburg to ensure against precipitous changes to the status quo

[446] Ibid. 11.
[447] John P. LeDonne, "Administrative Regionalization in the Russian Empire 1802-1826," *Cahiers Du Monde Russe* 43, no. 1 (March 2002): 5–33. 14.
[448] LeDonne, "Russian Governors General, 1775-1825." 28.

(this was further reinforced by the many prominent Baltic Germans already serving in the imperial capital).[449] In fact, Thaden identifies Governors-General as one of the biggest stumbling blocks for imposing closer imperial rule on the borderlands, as the Governors-General came to view their territories as their domain, and consequently defended their prerogatives against what they viewed as imperial intrusions.[450]

Even Governors-General who were interested in subjecting the Baltics more firmly under imperial control were forced to cooperate with those same gentry due to the absence of Russian civilian bureaucracy in the Borderlands. This was especially the case for Governor-General Browne, who served as the Governor-General in Livland between 1762 and 1792 and as Governor-General of Estland from 1775 to 1792. Browne was tasked by Catherine II to bring the Baltics into closer harmony with the rest of the empire, but this proved to be fruitless as the imperial government did not establish the kinds of governing institutions or provide for the number of personnel necessary to accomplish this goal. As a result, Baltic autonomy was barely scratched by Browne's efforts, and was in many ways reinforced.[451] Filipo Paulucci, who was the Governor-General from 1812 to 1830, was more successful in bringing administrative Russification to the Baltic territories, but his most wide-reaching efforts were mostly confined to the period of 1818-1823, when he had a personal rivalry with one of the more important Baltic government officials. Besides this five-year period, Paulucci enjoyed remarkably good relations with the Baltic German gentry and did not make any serious efforts to abridge their political or economic autonomy.[452]

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[449] Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*. 130-1.
[450] Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870*. 232-3.
[451] Ibid. 18-19.
[452] Ibid. 102-4.

Finland is even more striking in the degree to which Governors-General actively appeared to protect and extend Finland's political autonomy. It was difficult for the imperial government to reverse this trend, as under Paul I the office of Governor-General had been abolished (and restored under Alexander I) with the intent of allowing the Tsar to directly manage the empire's territories. In reality, this meant that the imperial government was robbed of its administrative capacity in Finland right at the time of its incorporation into the empire. When the first Governor-General (Count Sprengtporten) was appointed to Finland in 1809, he was to act as the Tsar's representative in the region and command the local military, while relaying administrative issues back to the imperial center (generally handled by the private secretary for Finnish Affairs, which was filled by Mikhail Speransky until 1811 when that function was replaced by a council of Finnish officials). Finland itself was managed by a governing council that became the Senate in 1816, with all members being Finns appointed by the emperor.[453] The Finnish government council was originally intended to advise the Governor-General, but it evolved such that civil matters came under the control of the council, and the Gov-Gen was bound to those decisions. This regulation was unique in the empire and gave Finland a source of its separate status.[454] The practical effect of this governing structure was that the Governor-General needed to cooperate with Finnish council members on a regular basis, while another council that was also interested in maintaining Finnish autonomy was responsible for maintaining communication with the emperor. The fact that it was official imperial policy to allow the Finns autonomy during Alexander's reign, it was relatively easy to establish and expand on this core autonomy. And as Jussila notes, all of

[453] LeDonne, "Russian Governors General, 1775-1825." 26.
[454] Jussila, *From Grand Duchy to Modern State*. 18-19.

the early Governors-General until Arseni Zakrevsky took over the office in 1824 helped to aid and abet this accumulation of political autonomy.[455]

By the end of Alexander I's reign, there was a retreat from regional autonomy and an attempted reassertion of central authority that Nicholas I would also pursue. The dissatisfaction with Alexander's flirtation with a more regionally-structured empire stemmed from the concern that reproducing the kinds of rights granted to Finland and Poland (in the 1815 constitution) in other regions could serve to undermine the unity of the empire as a whole. It was hoped that the office of the Governor-General could help arrest this regional drift and integrate borderland territories more closely with imperial administration.[456] Starting after 1823, and intensifying under Nicholas I, there was an effort to Russify Finnish administration under Governor-General Zakrevsky. This included the abolition of the Committee of Finnish Affairs, but also had the unintended side effect of strengthening the Finnish Senate. Likewise, Nicholas' crackdown after the Decembrist rebellion included the extension of the Third Section to Finland and other borderland regions, tightened censorship, and other predictable repression, but it also caused the delay of more ambitious Russification efforts in Finnish administration.[457] Nicholas was well disposed to critiques of borderland privileges (though as mentioned above, he also eventually defended borderland elites who he viewed as loyal to the empire) upon his accession, and interpreted Decembrist critiques of central administration as evidence that the central government needed to reinforce its authority and better utilize Governors-General.[458] However, Nicholas' instinct to centralize more

[455] Ibid. 34-7.
[456] LeDonne, "Administrative Regionalization in the Russian Empire 1802-1826." 20.
[457] Jussila, *From Grand Duchy to Modern State*. 27-9.
[458] LeDonne, "Administrative Regionalization in the Russian Empire 1802-1826." 27.

power in his personal chancery rather than in broader Tsarist administration helped to sap these efforts, as a personalized administration proved less adept at managing political problems in such a vast territory. Although Nicholas emphasized centralization and administrative Russification upon becoming Tsar, and although he tried to expand the numbers of the civil service, the limitations of the Russian government made it so that there was not adequate police, cultural, social services, or local administration in the provinces, making efforts at centralization rather mild.[459]

Nicholas' goals of bringing Finland closer to the imperial administration was also hampered by an ineffectual Governor-General, Prince Alexander Menshikov, who served for almost the entirety of Nicholas' reign from 1831 to 1855. Menshikov would eventually demonstrate his incompetence during the Crimean War, but for the time he was trusted by the Tsar to properly administrate his territory. In reality, Menshikov relied on men like Lars Gabriel von Haartman and Gustaf Armfelt (himself a previous Governor-General of Finland), who while not interested in breaking Finland away from the empire, were certainly interested in maintaining Finland's autonomy. Menshikov's strong reliance on Finnish gentry and his tendency to ward off imperial intrusions to protect his domain helped to stymie Russification efforts in the Grand Duchy, leaving Finland relatively untouched when compared to the other borderlands.[460] After Menshikov left office and the new reign of Alexander II commenced, Finland followed an arc similar to the other borderlands: initial reforms providing greater autonomy followed by increasingly stringent restrictions as Alexander's reign became more reactionary. Although concessions made by Alexander II strengthened Finnish autonomy

[459] Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870*. 117-9.
[460] Ibid. 202-6.

initially, the goal of unifying the empire's administrative structures carried the seeds of a deeper conflict. This included heightened activity by the gendarme and the conversion of the Governor-General into a militarized office that also commanded the local military districts. These changes, among others, laid the groundwork for the more thorough going Russification efforts of Alexander III.[461] Even given this, however, the Governor-General did not truly become a tool of Russification until the 1890s, and by that point the national awakening of Finland made such efforts ever more destabilizing.[462]

Beyond the Governors-General, other important institutions that existed within the borderlands were the army, the gendarme, and the Third Section. Unlike in the core cities of Moscow and Petersburg, the Third Section did not exercise substantial power in the borderland territories, both due to a lack of resources and a lack of freedom of movement vis-à-vis other institutions. Members of the gendarme tasked with keeping the borderlands under control enjoyed some autonomy from the central gendarme and the Third Section, but had to contend with regional Governors-General, local institutions, the military, etc, which limited their range of influence. One, A. Lomachevsky, exercised his power as a gendarme in Vilna district discreetly, being careful to confirm accusations, challenge flawed investigations, and even doing favors for local families and notables. The operation of the gendarme varied radically across the regions.[463] During times of heightened political stress, such as the period following the Decembrist rebellion, either of the Polish rebellions, and the European revolutions of 1848, the Third Section and the gendarme attained higher levels of influence due to the implementation of repressive policies in the borderlands, but in the case of the Baltics and Finland, this influence

[461] Jussila, *From Grand Duchy to Modern State*. 42-3.
[462] Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870*. 91-3.
[463] Monas, *The Third Section; Police and Society in Russia Under Nicholas I*. 110-112.

ultimately ebbed since these territories were seen as more reliable and quiescent than territories such as the Kingdom of Poland. Even so, it was usually the army that acted as the Tsar's guarantors of order and stability. After the 1848 revolutions, suspicion of the borderlands was high and the empire moved hundreds of thousands of troops into the regions, declaring martial law. However, the gentry generally cooperated, as they feared mutiny among the peasants. The cooperation with military officials during this period actually led Nicholas to reward the Baltics with a more flexible Governor-General.[464]

If Hetman Ukraine offers a strong example of the shift from the imperial logic to a more state-centered logic, then the Baltics and Finland offer an ambiguous alternative. During the 19th century, Tsarist rhetoric increasingly emphasized the need for centralization in the borderlands, but in practice Tsarist officials proved unwilling to completely abrogate traditional privileges, especially in territories where the local elites demonstrated exemplary loyalty and delivered effective social control. The Baltics and Finland offer just such an example of effective local clients, as the conservative elites (the Baltic Germans and the Swedish-oriented Finnish officials) served the state effectively while keeping a lid on dissent. This service did not completely insulate these territories from the creeping centralization of the Tsarist state, but the centralization that was pursued often occurred with the collaboration of the local elites (as in the abolition of serfdom in the Baltics) or served the interests of those elites (as with the suppression of more radical Finnish dissenters in the universities). The example of the Baltics and Finland demonstrates that while the Tsarist state was interested in administrative centralization as a response to the challenges of geopolitics, this centralization was usually directed against territories that failed to satisfy traditional imperial arrangements

[464] Ibid. 240-242.

(such as the weakness of the Ukrainian *starshyna* or the oppositionist tendencies of the Polish *szlachta*).

Repression and Control in Poland-Lithuania

The time that elapsed between accommodation and assertion of centralized control was shorter in the Congress Kingdom than in the other borderlands of the empire. With the adoption of the 1815 Constitution, the Polish elite hoped that the Congress Kingdom would have real political autonomy from the Tsarist state. However, Alexander's decision to appoint either Russians or subservient Polish figures to the most important posts in the Kingdom challenged these hopes. The appointment of his brother, Grand Duke Constantine, as Commander-in-Chief was undoubtedly the most important appointment, but the decision to appoint General Jozef Zajaczek as the Governor-General of Poland was equally problematic since the Zajaczek did not demonstrate much respect for government in Poland and oftentimes unilaterally imposed his decisions on the Kingdom. It did not help that it was widely expected that Prince Adam Czartoryski, a staunch defender of Polish autonomy, would be appointed to the position, but was instead passed over. Finally, the appointment of Nikolai Novosiltsev as imperial commisioner installed another individual hostile to Polish privileges, and he took advantage of his position on numerous occasions to warn the Tsar of the dangers of subversion or disloyalty among the Polish population. Novosiltsev had been more reformist earlier in Alexander's reign, but that tendency had died out by the time he was appointed to his Polish position. In much the same way as Tsarist appointments set the tone for preserved autonomy in the

Baltics and Finland, the appointments made in the Congress Kingdom set the tone for Tsarist interference.

Constantine proved to be a bad selection for such an important position within the Congress Kingdom, as he demonstrated open contempt for the constitution and showed little willingness to observe the rule of law. An early incident displayed this lack of regard, as Constantine attempted to subordinate the Ministry of War under General Wielhorski to his control, even though the ministry was supposed to report to both the Sejm and the State Council. Constantine forbade Wielhorski from responding to requests from the State Council concerning War Ministry plans, claiming that the Council had no jurisdiction over the military and that it was Constantine's prerogative to decide when to communicate with the Council. Wielhorski ended up not being as pliant as Constantine had hoped and complied with the State Council, in that he viewed Constantine's assertion of control over the ministry of war as a violation of the constitution. Constantine sought to have Wielhorski sacked, but Alexander ultimately opted to allow Wielhorski to retain his position, though to little effect until Wielhorski was finally allowed to resign and be replaced with a more subservient official.[465] Moreover, Constantine thought that the needs of the civilian government were so unimportant vis-à-vis the military that for the early years of the Congress Kingdom, the military received roughly half of the Kingdom's annual budget. Considering that this was during a period of recovery from serious and disruptive warfare, this severely handicapped the ability of the civilian government to administrate the territory of the Kingdom or address lingering problems.

While Constantine was uncooperative and domineering in his relations with the Kingdom's civilian government, his administration of the Polish military was arguably

[465] Pienkos, *The Imperfect Autocrat*. 34-6.

worse. Like his brothers and his father, Paul I, Constantine favored the strict military discipline and formality of the Prussian military tradition, and he applied this doctrine rigidly to the Polish military. He pursued this goal vigorously, since he personally loathed the freer and more flexible traditions of the Polish military, which in part reflected the 'golden freedoms' of the *szlachta*. He found such freedom as being destructive of military effectiveness and discipline.[466] Constantine's petty tyrannies over the Polish military were extensive. He effectively forced generals and officers he disliked to resign, and impressed on recruits the extreme view of submission and obedience that he viewed as essential to soldiery. To guarantee that his men were presentable, Constantine would have the army march for hours to grueling perfection for parade ground spectacles, but did not emphasize battlefield prowess. Soldiers were forced to wear tight-fitting and uncomfortable clothes and boots for their appearance, not their function.[467] Constantine also favored the use of a secret police to keep himself apprised of individual units in the military, with spies informing him of virtually every goings-on among the troops. This had a crippling effect on morale and unit cohesion. Moreover, Constantine himself preferred to preside over the judgment and punishment for infractions, and favored the use of corporal punishment, even for relatively minor failures. Constantine devised particularly cruel forms of punishment to indicate his dissatisfaction. During his reign, the Polish army had an unusually high number of suicides, retirements, and cases of mental illness, not to mention a very high desertion rate.[468] Most of the practices Constantine employed to maintain control over the military in fact violated both codified military rules and the terms of the 1815 constitution.

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[466] Thackeray, *Antecedents of Revolution*. 38-9.
[467] Pienkos, *The Imperfect Autocrat*. 42-3.
[468] Ibid. 46-7.

The Tsar did not act as a bulwark against Constantine's abuses, partly because he was loathe to interfere with his brother's rule, but also because he himself was shifting away from conciliation with Poland. During 1818-1820, the Tsar shifted towards a more authoritarian policy emphasizing control and repression. Thackeray traces this shift to the outburst of revolutionary movements in other parts of Europe, and to the continuing hostility of influential Russians to the Polish policy.[469] One area where the shift was immediately evident was in press censorship. The 1815 constitution paradoxically enshrined freedom of press and the need to repress abuses of the freedom of press. This contradiction provided the basis for the creeping censorship evident in the Congress Kingdom, with both the education ministry and the police playing a role in supervising printed materials. This only became truly relevant in 1818 and 1819, when Polish publications arose that were markedly less friendly to the Russian administrators. In response to these publications, Zajaczek instituted two decrees on press censorship without waiting for confirmation from Petersburg (which was eventually provided after the fact), in direct contravention of the constitution.[470] After complaining about its failure to curb abuses of freedom of press, Zajaczek decreed in 1820 that all political works and periodicals needed to be submitted to the police for censorship rather than the education ministry. Alexander confirmed this decision, but also gave the interior ministry some purview on the matter. Furthermore, censorship was extended to all publications, and not merely those areas that had previously been under censor jurisdiction. This was extended to foreign publications in 1821, and when the reactionary Grabowski was installed at the education ministry, press censorship reverted to that ministry in 1822. All of this had a

[469] Thackeray, *Antecedents of Revolution*. 54.
[470] Ibid. 61-5.

pernicious effect on Polish journalism, as the arbitrary character of the censorship sapped the will of the educated public, in much the same way it would under Nicholas I in Russia itself.[471]

More broadly, Polish life became subject to a heightened level of surveillance and policing. Constantine had always kept a close eye on areas within his jurisdiction, using spy agencies to keep his troops in order, but as relations in Poland chilled the use of these types of agencies extended throughout the system as a whole. In 1822, Constantine established his Secret Chancery to provide another layer of secret policing to his arsenal. In addition to investigating all 'suspicious persons', the chancery also spied on Russian officials including Novosiltsev and even the Tsar, to keep Constantine apprised of the state of affairs (and which demonstrates how jealously Constantine guarded his freedom of action even from the Tsarist state itself).[472] During the course of the Congress Kingdom's existence, Poland had 11 distinct police and spy agencies, ranging from those within the government to the military police and personal chanceries for high officials such as Constantine. A gendarme was also established, along the lines of those that would be instituted in Russia after the Decembrist rebellion. However, the effectiveness of the various spy organizations was limited by the presence of rivalries and disputes between them.[473]

Universities were watched especially closely, as they were assumed to be hotbeds of radicalism and dissent that could potentially subvert the next generation of Poles. Between 1819-1821, secret societies and student societies (which Alexander himself had once patronized) were gradually proscribed, beginning with a Warsaw University edict in

[471] Ibid. 94-8.
[472] Pienkos, *The Imperfect Autocrat*. 72-3.
[473] Thackeray, *Antecedents of Revolution*. 109-110.

1819 forbidding students to associate and ending with the empire-wide ban on secret societies instituted in 1821. This by necessity drove associations underground and rendered them illegal in the same stroke. The ban on secret societies was in a large way produced by Novosiltsev constantly deluging the Tsar with largely fanciful tales about the extent of secret societies in Polish schools.[474] In addition to this rooting out of subversive groups, the structure of education itself was also attacked. Under Potocki, Polish secondary education and universities had made great strides, and had the potential to develop into sophisticated European centers of learning. However, the reaction that set in led to the ouster of Potocki in favor of the obscurantist Stanislaw Grabowski. Grabowski presided over the destruction of the progressive educational edifice constructed by Potocki up until 1820, and subjected students to close surveillance by school police to guarantee against subversion. Unreliable instructors were harassed or dismissed by the ministry, and subjects which were deemed as not fit for the times were either radically scaled back or cut altogether, focusing mainly on areas such as history, philosophy, and literature.[475] Previously, under Potocki, the number of young Poles who had access to quality education had increased dramatically, but under Grabowski the number of higher education students in institutions like the University of Warsaw contracted rapidly. The situation in regions outside of Warsaw was even worse, as access was shut off for most students.

This period also corresponded with Alexander's disenchantment with the government institutions of the Congress Kingdom and his increasing reliance on Constantine and Novosiltsev to unilaterally enforce his writ. Alexander lost his tolerance

[474] Ibid. 69-70, 124-5.
[475] Ibid. 105-7.

for the Sejm's deliberations, mainly because of the emergence of the Liberal Opposition grouping that was openly critical of the Tsar and his policies. This produced a more confrontational attitude in the Tsar, and caused the government to include Sejm minutes within the preliminary censorship. These heavy-handed measures failed to cow the opposition and in fact drove more prominent Poles into the arms of that opposition.[476] The Liberal Opposition formed around 1820 under the leadership of the Niemojowski brothers, Sejm deputies from the city of Kalisz. Alexander viewed the Liberal Opposition and the Niemojowski brothers with such trepidation that he sought to find ways to bar them from taking their seats in the Sejm. When he was unsuccessful in suppressing the brothers, he directed his ire at the Sejm itself, implying that its continued conduct may lead him to reconsider his dedication to the 1815 Constitution. Alexander's inability to brook any form of opposition to his rule calls into question the sincerity of his constitutional beliefs, and does seem to support the assessment that Alexander was never a true enlightenment liberal.

The disenchantment with the Sejm led Alexander to seek alternatives for the effective rule of Poland. In 1822, a conflict emerged between Constantine and Alexander over authority in Poland. Alexander sought to imbue Constantine with ill-defined dictatorial powers (with the agreement of Zajaczek and Novosiltsev) to help stanch any nascent revolutionary threats in Poland. Constantine rejected this grant, claiming that he needed permanent authority to exceed the constitution and further cement his position in Poland and Lithuania. The resulting decrees merely confirmed some of Constantine's powers, but did not solve the underlying conflict.[477] However, after this point,

[476] Ibid. 76-8.
[477] Ibid. 86-9.

Constantine enjoyed increasing power and authority within Poland, and even within Lithuania after he was made head of the Lithuanian Corps. Pienkos suggests that there was a succession bargain struck between Alexander and Constantine, where Constantine surrendered his claim to the throne in return for greater control over Poland-Lithuania. Constantine's expanding power within Poland suggests that this explanation has some merit.[478] It may also help explain why Constantine's approach to dealing with Poland softened after 1822, even to the point where he acted as its advocate before his brother. Constantine understood that to cement his control he needed to cultivate support among Polish notables, and he began to do so in the early 1820s, mainly among the wealthy *szlachta* and the Roman Catholic clergy. However, by 1825 Constantine had become such a steady defender of Polish autonomy, he even managed to get the qualified support of Czartoryski, who had previously opposed him and his position fiercely.[479] It is a strange inversion that preceding Alexander's death in 1825, it was Constantine who was viewed as Poland's protector, while Alexander was becoming increasingly intolerant of Polish liberties.

The death of Alexander, the failed Decembrist rebellion, and the accession of Nicholas I created a hostile context for the Congress Kingdom and its constitutional experiment. Although Alexander had not observed the terms of the 1815 Constitution with much diligence and though his agents did not respect its validity, Nicholas saw the constitutional experiment as an obvious mistake and only retained the 1815 constitution out of loyalty to his dead brother. However, Polish complicity (however limited) in the Decembrist rebellion threatened this fragile status quo. After the rebellion, the

[478] Pienkos, *The Imperfect Autocrat*. 64.
[479] Ibid. 70-1.

involvement of the Polish Patriotic Society was uncovered, leading to an inquiry and a trial on the charges of treason for its key members. However, the tribunal returned a verdict stating that the Patriotic Society members were not guilty of treason, only of belonging to an illegal organization. This finding enraged both Constantine and Nicholas, although Constantine had defended the Poles earlier during the episode, even excusing the will to rebel.[480] In reality, the involvement of the Patriotic Society was limited to a few contacts with the Decembrists and the discussion of a possible uprising in Poland to coincide with the Decembrist uprising, but this never materialized in practice during the rebellion, most likely due to the small size and lack of resources on the part of the Patriotic Society. However, for Nicholas even these links were evidence of the treasonous character of Poles, and he was not willing to accept the findings of the tribunal. The decision of Nicholas to retry the Patriotic Society's leader, Krzyzanowski, in the late 1820s caused a new rift between the Poles and Russians, while leading some prominent Poles including Czartoryski to question the Russian connection. Ultimately, this uncertain time period can be seen as the critical juncture leading up to the November rebellion in 1830.[481]

After the outbreak of the November rebellion and the close escape of Constantine from Warsaw, the leaders within the Polish provisional government realized that they were unlikely to defeat Russia in a military confrontation, but instead hoped that they could use the leverage of the insurrection to gain concessions from Nicholas. In this hope, they misjudged Nicholas and how he was likely to respond to such a challenge to his authority. Nicholas viewed the rebellion as an existential threat to the empire, as it would

[480] Ibid. 89-91.
[481] Ibid. 97-8.

threaten Russia's status as a great power and also, in his mind, open the doors to other groups within the empire demanding similar constitutional concessions. Seeing firm, centralized autocracy as the only way to properly prevent the centripetal forces that threatened the empire, Nicholas resolved to firmly quash the rebellion immediately.[482] Nicholas' unwillingness to negotiate forced the situation into open military conflict, with the Poles eventually losing and most of their leaders going into exile in France or Britain. Czartoryski, the most notable figure who had supported the Russian connection, emigrated to Britain and then eventually to France where he continued to attempt to influence the course of events in Poland, though he was condemned to death *in absentia*. The other most notable figure of Congress Poland, Grand Duke Constantine, died of cholera in Vitebsk in 1831, after narrowly avoiding assassination in the tumultuous beginning of the insurrection. The wiping away of the all the significant political figures in Poland opened the way for Nicholas to impose his preferred outcome on the prostrate kingdom.

After the insurrection had been suppressed, Nicholas moved to eliminate most vestiges of autonomy within the Congress Kingdom. This included the abolition of distinctive Polish institutions, the disbanding of the Polish army, the closing of the University of Warsaw, and the demotion of Polish as official language in favor of Russian. Officers who served in the insurrection were deported to Siberia and nobles lost their estates.[483] The Tsarist state also moved to remove the mint from Polish control, and to replace the Polish zloty with a Russian-backed currency. This was a move meant to

[482] Zawadzki, *A Man of Honour*. 311.
[483] Hosking, *Russia*. 31-3.

undermine the symbolic and fiscal independence of Poland.[484] Above all else, the insurrection provided Nicholas with the justification to eliminate the hated 1815 Constitution, which he saw as the primary obstacle to effectively ruling all the lands of the empire. In 1832, Nicholas abolished the 1815 Constitution and replaced it with the so-called "Organic Statute" which set out of the terms of rule within the territory of Poland, but in reality Poland was administered by the brutal means of Nicholas' new viceroy, Marshal Paskevich. This inaugurated an era of creeping Russification under Nicholas, who gradually replaced Polish governing methods with Russian institutions and officials.[485] However, even given Nicholas' desire to see Poland fully incorporated into the imperial system of governance, the Russification efforts were by necessity incomplete. Most of the members of the civil service remained Polish, the *szlachta* (at least the ones who had not participated in the insurrection) were permitted to retain their special status, the legal system remained largely in Polish hands, and the Polish language and the Uniate Church continued to be tolerated.[486] This can primarily be attributed to the lack of personnel within the Tsarist civil service to take over the administrative functions of the former kingdom, a situation that would not fundamentally change even after the second insurrection of 1863-4.

The situation within Lithuania, the lands that had been incorporated into the empire during the partitions and which had not reverted to the control of the Congress Kingdom, was arguably worse. Following the partitions, the Tsarist government approached the governance of the Lithuanian lands in much the same way it had approached the Baltics and Finland. It relied upon collaboration with the local social

[484] Burbank, et al, *Russian Empire*. 303.
[485] Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855*. 229-231.
[486] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*. 249-250.

elites to maintain stability and did not interfere with existing social relationships, to the benefit of the gentry. The level of development in these lands was generally perceived as being higher than in the rest of the empire, so there was the hope that allowing regional government greater autonomy could allow for the region to act as an model for reforming other portions of the empire. Consequently, even though Alexander I did attempt some minor streamlining of the local governments, much of the institutional machinery was left in place, while Polish-style education and the Catholic Church were also permitted to retain their positions.[487] However, despite these allowances, the quiescence of the Lithuanian lands proved to be inadequate in the face of Polish uprising. The 1830-1 rebellion in Poland also prompted a smaller rising in the Lithuanian lands, but these were comparatively poorly-organized with unclear aims. The rebels lacked organization in urban centers and had few supplies, and were then treated with predictable repressive measures once the uprising was quashed.[488]

After 1831, the Tsarist government abandoned its traditional policy of allowing some degree of regional autonomy for the Lithuanian lands and moved to incorporate these lands more firmly into the empire. The first step taken was the abolition of the Lithuanian Statute and the introduction of Russian law, removing the most vital strut of regional autonomy. This included the elimination of some non-Russian governing institutions, the centralization of rule, and the replacement of local elites with Russian administrators.[489] The state identified the *szlachta* in the Western Guberniia as the most dangerous source of opposition to the empire and moved to undermine their control over

[487] Darius Staliunas, "Did the Government Seek to Russify Lithuanians and Poles in the Northwestern Region After the Uprising of 1863-64?," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 2 (2004): 273–289., 276.
[488] Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*. 201-4.
[489] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*. 249-250.

political and economic institutions in Lithuania. Towards this end, 40% of the *szlachta* in the guberniia were reclassified as either state peasants or burghers, effectively eliminating their source of gentry privilege. Moreover, the Governor-General of the guberniia was instructed to fill local positions with officials from other guberniia in the empire, to help undercut Polish dominance in local government. These measures were only partly successful, as the majority of officials remained Polish Catholics.[490] The state also tried to undermine *szlachta* power by pursuing land reform in the post-1831 period, so that Lithuanian (and Belorussian and Ukrainian) peasants would be empowered vis-a-vis their Polish landlords. The attempted reforms were modest and mainly took the form of producing inventories of peasant obligations so that the *szlachta* would not retain complete control over the peasantry, and so that the peasants themselves might develop a loyalty to the Tsarist state. However, the reforms met with limited success, as the number of Tsarist officials in the region was not adequate enough to enforce the inventories without the cooperation of the *szlachta*. As one would imagine, the *szlachta* were not forthcoming with this kind of assistance.[491]

Following the application of Russification measures in the wake of the 1830 Insurrection and for the rest of the reign of Nicholas I, Poland remained under strict control by the Tsarist state to guarantee its quiescence. The government under Paskevitch slackened after the initial wave of repression, but Poland was never able to regain the degree of autonomy enjoyed in the other parts of the borderlands, where Nicholas' inconsistent Russification policy left a much lighter touch. However, after the death of Nicholas in 1855 and the accession of the relatively liberal Alexander II, Poland's

[490] Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870*. 123-4.
[491] Ibid. 134-7.

fortunes looked to improve at a time when the new Tsar was loosening restrictions put into place by his father. Specific measures directed towards Poland included amnesties for those still in prison due to the 1830-1 insurrection, an increase in autonomy for local government in Poland, and a stronger public role for the Polish elites.[492] However, this relaxation of restrictions also allowed for the reemergence of resentment against Russian rule in Poland and eventually snowballed into a replay of the 1830-1 uprising when Poland and parts of Lithuania descended into open revolt in 1863-4. After the suppression of the Polish rebellion, the government concluded that it was necessary to undermine independent sources of Polish power and to forcibly integrate the region into the empire politically, culturally, and religiously. This would become the blueprint for later, albeit milder, Russification efforts in the borderlands.[493]

Conclusion

As Tsarist policy in the Western Borderlands indicates, the process of shifting from a decentralized, imperial system to a centralized, modern state, was hardly consistent and unambiguous. It progressed in fits and starts, with the state gradually encroaching on borderland privileges when opportunities were present and retreating when the potential costs of centralization were too high. The overriding concern with loyalty and maintaining geopolitical security blunted the impulse to centralization, and the territories and local elites which failed to deliver these benefits were the first targeted by aggressive efforts of administrative harmonization. Thus, the Baltics and Finland escaped from the process with modest modifications to their autonomy, while Ukraine and Poland saw

[492] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*. 252.
[493] Burbank, et al, *Russian Empire*. 464.

their autonomous existence compromised or eliminated, even though the state continued to rely on indigenous elites even in these latter cases. The nature of the Tsarist system compounded these inconsistent tendencies, as the accomplishments of centralizing Tsars were reversed or muted by subsequent Tsars less willing to follow through in creating the well-ordered police state. Peter's massive reforms were moderated by weak successors, Catherine II's were reversed by successors seeking to thwart her legacy (Paul I) or to reform it (Alexander I), and the reign of Nicholas I was marked by a internal ambiguity concerning the vigor of centralizing efforts. The persistence of informal governing mechanisms (private chanceries) and the relative absence of a consistent bureaucratic institutions further accentuated these swings, as Tsars in practice proved unwilling to sacrifice their personal prerogative to empower bureaucratic offices.

Up until the end of Nicholas I's reign in 1855, the process of centralization in the Western Borderlands reflected the inherent tension between imperial modes of governance and state-centric modes of governances. In conformity with the state-building literature, centralization proceeded under the pressures of geopolitical competition and the need for the state to extract more resources from the population. Extending social control through direct rule was the most obvious way of accomplishing this goal. However, this process was complicated by the imperial nature of the state, with the estates system and reliance on local elites vitiating the centralizing impulse unless the state was willing to employ coercion, as it did in Ukraine and Poland. As I hope the preceding sections demonstrate, the variable of primary importance in determining the direction of Tsarist centralizing efforts was the strength and orientation of the local elites, as well as their ability to manipulate Tsarist institutions to their own ends. This is most

clearly demonstrated in the case of the Baltics and Finland, where not only did the local elites successfully defend their positions, they oftentimes enlisted the nominally-Tsarist institution of the Governor-General to do the same. The under-bureaucratization of the Russian core allowed the Governor-Generals enough institutional autonomy to dictate their own path, since the state was incapable of directly managing these officials (though it occasionally tried to do so).

The ambiguities of Tsarist centralization efforts were mostly resolved in the second half of the 19th century, as the state moved from a strictly administrative form of Russification to an aggressive cultural Russification. The implementation of these policies still corresponded closely to the traditional position of borderland elites within the empire, but even compliant elites (Baltic Germans and Finnish elites) saw many privileges abridged during these years. In many ways, this was the logical consequence of the shift towards a state-centric mode of governance, as the Tsarist state faced off against external rivals that not only possessed a coherent and effective bureaucratic structure, but also were able to call upon nationalist sentiments among their populations. Combined with the shock of failure in the Crimean War which challenged the efficacy of Tsarist governance and the great reforms of the 1860s which removed serfdom as the traditional strut of loyalty among the gentry, the Tsar and his advisors increasingly came under the influence of Russian nationalists promoting policies designed to destroy the autonomy of ethnic and religious minorities. This process began under Alexander II, during his turn towards reactionary policies in the latter half of his reign, but only achieved its peak under the policies of Alexander III and Nicholas II. The next chapter details this process in the Western Borderlands, as the Tsarist state abandoned its traditional source of loyalty

in these territories in an (ill-fated) attempt to reconstruct the Tsarist Empire as a modern nation-state.

CHAPTER VI

RUSSIFICATION AND THE END OF IMPERIAL AUTONOMY

Up until the middle of the 19th century, the relationship between the Tsarist state and the Western Borderlands followed the logic of a decentralized, multi-ethnic empire. As discussed in the previous chapters, the initial incorporation of these regions was accompanied by large grants of political and cultural autonomy, usually reinforced by the corporate power of local elites. It was only during parts of the 18th and the early 19th century that this decentralized status quo was challenged, with the Tsarist state pursuing administrative centralization in response to perceived geopolitical weakness. This centralization was far from complete and mainly aimed to improve administrative control over the borderlands in order to increase extractive capabilities and to reinforce the empire's military position within Europe. With the exception of the Ukrainian Hetmanate, local elites retained their privileged position in the borderland regions and most areas of autonomy remained untouched by the central authorities. This was especially true for cultural autonomy, as the Tsarist ethos of loyalty trumped ethnic and religious concerns and provided little incentive to disrupt largely profitable relationships with influential local elites. Even Nicholas I's ideology of official nationality had little to do in practice with ethnic Russian nationalism.

This state of affairs, however, began to morph during the 19th century, when nationality gradually took on an ethnic-centered hue. During the pre-19th-century imperial period, rule came to be associated symbolically with the space of the empire. In this way, territorial control and sovereignty was the important hallmark, and the guiding conception of nationality. This only began to change in the 19th century, as this imperial

conceptualization of space began to give way to a more unitary conception of nationhood.[494] Before this period, differences such as ethnicity and religion were considered by Tsarist administrators, and oftentimes those who were considered different were ill-treated, but the state never took it as an object, per se, to persecute differentness. Administrative distinctions such as *inorodtsy* (of a different people) and *inozemsty* (of a different land) existed, but they only became the basis of policy-making in the latter half of the 19th century when ethnic distinctions became important to the government. Evidence for this can be seen from the fact that communities of *inorodtsy* and *inozemsty* were ruled in a number of different manners (direct military government, indirect rule, and even constitutionalism) rather than being uniformly assimilated.[495] Further evidence can be gleaned by the position of the Russians themselves in their own empire. Russians, as an ethnic group, lagged behind many non-Russian communities in terms of metrics like literacy, urbanization, and relative levels of education and affluence. Most Russians experienced worse living conditions than citizens in the western regions, and this only grew worse as one went further eastward. As a result, it is inappropriate to judge Russians writ large as the favored race of the empire, but rather it is better to view the empire as the preserve of a Russian-dominated multiethnic power elite from the more privileged estates.[496]

The emergence of *narodnost* in Russian politics during the course of the 19th century transformed the relationship between the core and the borderlands. Nicholas I's 'official nationality' and modest efforts to Russify non-Russian areas can be seen as the harbinger of this larger process of change, though his government for the most part

[494] Ibid. 53-5.
[495] Suny, *The Revenge of the Past*. 23.
[496] Kappeler, *Russian Empire*, 322-3.

retained the traditional reliance on clients and dynastic loyalty. Significant groupings of Russian intellectuals (liberal and conservative) also adopted the language of *narodnost*, but with substantially more fervor than the state. The concept was fueled by the popularity of German romanticism embraced by the intelligentsia in the 1830s and 1840s, and eventually manifested itself in a vocal Russian nationalist movement epitomized by individuals like Mikhail Katkov who saw the Russification of the empire as necessary to its survival. After the Crimean War, this group exerted increasing influence over the government, and helped to impart a negative connotation on *inorodtsy* that was translated into laws and policies targeting non-Russian groups.[497] As Kappeler notes:

> Simultaneously, in the growing public space, modern Russian nationalism was emerging and beginning to advocate the unity of the imperial or civic nation with the ethnic Russian nation. This new ideology, propagated during the 1860s mainly by Mikhail Katkov, weakened the old pillars of the empire – political loyalty to the autocrat and reliance on the elites regardless of their language or religion. Although the Tsarist authorities were suspicious of modern nationalism, which was connected with the growth of an autonomous and the spread of democracy, the new concept of a Russian ethno-political nation began to influence their policies. Owing to the growing emphasis on ethnic issues, loyalty was increasingly identified with ethnicity rather than social status. Poles – and later Germans, Jews, and other nationalities – were regarded more and more often as "enemy" nations.[498]

Obrusenie, or Russification, became an overriding concern starting in the 1860s, despite previous, milder efforts to Russify. The concern with *obrusenie* emerged in response to defeat in the Crimean War and the conclusion that Russia needed to modernize and become a normal nation-state to keep up with the rest of Europe.[499] Such efforts were not consistent, as the state had to contend with the fact that imperial stability was largely based on the old methods of incorporation, and these could not be wiped

[497] Burbank, et al, *Russian Empire*. 172-3.
[498] Andreas Kappeler, "The Ambiguities of Russification," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 2 (2004): 291–297. 293-4.
[499] Burbank, et al, *Russian Empire*. 175-6.

away quickly even if they were viewed as outmoded in the age of nationalism.[500] Nationality policy was not uniform as some groups (such as the Baltic Germans, Finns, and Armenians among others) were treated relatively well, while others (Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews) were treated as potentially subversive groups. These latter groups were viewed as either alien or suspicious, with educational and linguistic rights severely abridged since those were mediums viewed as undermining Tsarist unity.[501] By the last decade of the 19th century, however, *obrusenie* had come to embrace even the historically loyal non-Russian groups, including the Baltic Germans and the Finns, and the outcome was the alienation of these groups from Tsarist rule (this is most remarkable in the case of Finland, which shall be discussed below). Given the relations, or lack thereof, between the core and borderlands in the waning years of the empire, it is not for nothing that Lenin referred to the empire as the "prison house of nations."

The creeping nationalization present during the late years of the Tsarist Empire represents the logical culmination of the state-building process and a definitive break with the imperial past. The abolition of serfdom in Alexander II's great reforms acted as a harbinger for this policy shift, as it did away with the tension that Poggi identified between the centralizing nation-state and the labor-repressive agricultural systems common to the political systems of Eastern Europe.[502] By eliminating this vital strut of loyalty, Tsarism took an extraordinary risk by attempting to reconstruct the foundation of the state's legitimacy, which corresponds with Tilly's observation about the efforts of

[500] Jeff Sahadeo, "Visions of Empire: Russia's Place in an Imperial World," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 11, no. 2 (2010): 381–409. 389.
[501] Suny, *The Revenge of the Past*. 26-7.
[502] Poggi, *The State*.

states to homogenize their populations even if it could potentially provoke instability.[503] The shock of the Crimean War was seen as ample justification for this major departure from past policies, and the emergence of political radicalism and terrorism in the 1870s and 1880s only served to harden the state into the policy path of rigorous Russification. Yet, as the experiences of the individual borderland regions indicate (discussed in detail below), this newfound ardor for Russification did not solve the state's capacity problem in the imperial periphery, the disjuncture between the state's despotic power and its infrastructural capabilities.[504] It may have been the state's goal, consistent with both the state-building literature and the empire literature,[505] to eliminate the capability of internal elites to obstruct central policy in pursuit of this national dream, but the administrative arithmetic was not in the state's favor.

As such, it remains possible to perceive the continuing importance of local elites in the borderland regions, as the imperial state made this final, fateful step. The variation was not as stark as during the process of administrative centralization, as even "friendly" elites were forced to conform to at least some of the center's dictates, but the process was also by no means uniform. Indeed, Levi's discussion about the role of coercion versus quasi-voluntary compliance in resolving negotiations between the state and internal groups is extremely pertinent to the case of the Tsarist Empire.[506] Where the state still faced coherent corporate power, it was necessary to decide between these two policy paths in attempting to gain compliance. In the case of Poland, coercion was costly, but it was also the logical outcome of the previous, failed policies of accommodation with the

[503] Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*.
[504] See Mann, *States, War and Capitalism*.
[505] See Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*. Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires*.
[506] Levi, *Of Rule and Revenue*.

szlachta (not to mention all the non-gentry groups that were now appearing on the stage of history). In the Baltics and Finland, the negotiating position of the local elites was partly compromised by the emergence of outside groups, usually in the form of nationalist movements, that could undermine the old compact of autonomy in return for social stability. However, the traditional elites were still viewed as potential allies such that quasi-voluntary compliance was still the state's strategy, especially in the Baltics. In Ukraine, the policy choice was largely moot due to the defection of the starshyna and the absence of a sufficiently influential elite group that could bargain with the state (as the Ukrainophile intellectuals were few in number and easily repressed).

This chapter, therefore, demonstrates the continuing relevance of local elites and their relationship with the empire, even if this relationship was threatened by dramatic changes in leadership choice in the imperial core. The process of Russification in the Western Borderlands in the latter half of the 19th century validates the importance of the variable of elite actions and ideologies in the imperial core. Focusing on the strength and orientation of elites in the borderlands themselves retains compelling importance in the theoretical model of direct and indirect rule employed here, but such a focus would be incomplete without also considering the agency of imperial officials and, above all, the Tsar. Nicholas I's "official nationality" laid the groundwork for later ideological shifts and provided important political space for ethnic Russian nationalism, even if Nicholas himself did not trust Russian nationalism. The reigns of Alexander III and Nicholas II exemplify the culmination of this process and the way in which it placed pressure on the traditional methods of indirect rule employed in the borderlands. Yet, as this chapter shows, even the dramatic shift towards Russification was not enough to dislodge local

elite power, especially in the Baltics where the Baltic Germans remained important servitors up until World War I.

Creating "Little Russians"

With the successful consolidation of administrative control in the former Hetmanate, the Tsarist state turned to other modes of integration during the 19th century. Whereas previously the state had only cared about the loyalty and productivity of borderland territories, in the second half of the 19th century there was an increasing concern with nationalism and national unity, especially after the Great Reforms of the early 1860s destroyed the previous basis of the state (the labor-repressive system of serfdom). Thus, instead of emphasizing administrative harmonization and control, the state sought to mold imperial subjects into the dominant culture while also attacking the linguistic and cultural rights of other groups. This was true in all of the borderlands, but it assumed a different character in Ukraine (and Belarus) due to the historical lineage of the Kievan Rus and the perception that Ukraine "belonged" within the greater Russian national project (unlike the Baltic German Protestants or the Polish Catholics). Ukraine, though part of the borderlands in the same way as the Baltics or Poland, straddled a domestic-foreign divide in Russian imperial imagination. It was seen as both an organic part of "Russia" and also as an exotic locale relevant to Russian interests. This perception can help to explain why the integration and assimilation of Ukraine found virtually unanimous approval across the Russian political spectrum, while this was not the case for the other parts of the borderlands. Any separate Ukrainian identity could be construed as

a direct threat to Russian identity itself.[507] In addition, Russification efforts directed at subjects in regions like Poland were often interpreted as a kind of punishment for disloyalty to the state. In contrast, Russification in Ukraine and Belarus were seen as benign processes bringing the other Russian peoples back into the mother culture.[508] This was the logic that helped to drive Russification efforts in the former Hetmanate during the latter half of the 19th century.

Cultural Russification occurred in the Hetmanate prior to this period of time, but it was not the product of a consistent set of policies on the part of the Tsarist state. The process of nationalization under the Romanovs took far longer than in other parts of Europe, partly because of how much the dynasty resisted the emergence of national identity among all the peoples of the empire, including Russians. There was not much coordination between the state and the population, and the insistently autocratic nature of government resisted the expanded popular participation and civil society that came hand-in-hand with nationalization.[509] As a consequence, policies directed towards language and culture tended to be isolated incidents rather than part of an ambitious Russification campaign. In the early 18th century, the *starshyna* were encouraged to marry into Russian families and adopt their traditions rather than marrying Poles and Lithuanians. This policy was mainly directed towards minimizing Polish influence and power. In addition, a 1720 action by the Senate ordered that Ukrainian books be inspected to guarantee that they were consistent with Great Russian Orthodox church books, but this

[507] Alexei Miller, *The Ukrainian Question: The Russian Empire and Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Budapest□; New York: Central European University Press, 2003). XIV-XV.
[508] Alexei Miller, "Shaping Russian and Ukrainian Identities in the Russian Empire During the Nineteenth Century: Some Methodological Remarks," *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas* 49, no. 2, Neue Folge (January 1, 2001): 257–263. 259.
[509] Miller, *The Ukrainian Question*. 4-5.

was directed towards doctrinal unity in the Orthodox churches.[510] During the 18th century, the height of Russian efforts towards administrative centralization in the Hetmanate, Ukrainian language and culture were being undermined by the incursion of Great Russian culture, but it would be a mistake to attribute this to a conscious effort of cultural Russification. Instead, as Andreas Kappeler argues, it would be more appropriate to consider this incursion more as a product of "spontaneous" acculturation, as the *starshyna* took on the trappings of Russian culture in an attempt to protect and extend their estate privileges.[511] This process of acculturation was important to the assimilation of Ukraine, but it was fundamentally driven by the economic and political interests of the local elite. The peasantry and rank-and-file Cossacks by and large retained Ukrainian language and customs.

It was not until the early 19th century that a serious effort was made to develop Ukrainian into a modern, national language that corresponded with a Ukrainian culture. The effort to turn Ukrainian into a fully-fledged national language was difficult, as it was perceived as a colloquial language spoken by the common folk, while Ukrainian elites tended to speak in Russian. Only in the 19th century did the first Ukrainian intellectuals start to make an effort to spread Ukrainian language instruction and create a standardized orthography.[512] Initially, the Tsarist government was supportive of the Ukrainian awakening in the early 19th century, since the emergence of a "Little Russian" culture was seen as a potentially useful addition to Russian identity. Especially after the 1830-1 Polish Uprising, this awakening was supported as a way to separate Ukrainians from

[510] Orest Subtelny, "Russia and the Ukraine: The Difference That Peter I Made," *Russian Review* 39, no. 1 (January 1, 1980): 1–17. 14.
[511] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*. 104.
[512] Subtelny, *Ukraine*. 229-230.

Polish influence. This official support, however, dried up almost entirely with the discovery of the Society of St. Cyril and Methodious.[513] Official support was also no guarantee of support within the Russian intellectual community. Although some Russian intellectuals supported the educational and literary efforts in Ukrainian, even some liberal members of the intelligentsia such as the critic Vissarion Belinsky were dismissive of "Little Russian" efforts. Belinsky went so far as to denigrate the literary quality of Ukraine's first national poet, Taras Shevchenko, and suggested that Russian would be a more effective medium for artistic achievement.

Official support for Ukrainophile activity ended with the discovery of the Society of St. Cyril and Methodious, a secret society based in Kiev that called for an overhaul of the existing political order. Since the Society was discovered during the height of the 1848 European revolutions, the Tsarist state was less likely to tolerate such political activities. The Society constructed a political program that called for Slavic union, with Slavic peoples uniting together under a federal style system that followed the precepts of Christ and operated with an assembly (Sejm) and substantial autonomy for each area. The program was not all that different from that of Russian Pan-Slavist groups. The Society was denounced in a rather exaggerated report by the informant Petrov, at which point its members were arrested by the Third Section and their possessions (primarily their personal papers) were seized as evidence. The case was viewed as being important enough that the head of the Third Section, Count Orlov, and his director General Leonty Dubelt, were tasked with handling the it.[514] In Orlov's report, it was acknowledged that

[513] Yekelchyk, *Ukraine*. 40-1.
[514] George Stephen Nestor Luckyj, *Young Ukraine: The Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Kiev, 1845-1847*, University of Ottawa Ukrainian Studies no. 13 (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1991). 45-6, 58-9.

the Society amounted to very little in practical activity, but was restricted to the realm of ideas. However, these ideas, especially the poetry of Shevchenko, were seen as potentially more threatening than action. Although as a whole the sentences were rather mild, individuals like Shevchenko were punished more severely for the ideas they expressed. This would be similar to the treatment of the ideas of the Ukrainophiles in the 1860s and 1870s.[515] At the time, the reasoning the state employed for the light sentences (except in the case of Shevchenko and another member, A. Gulak) was that harsh repression may trigger additional opposition later on, and so leniency was used to guarantee against the emergence of another Polish problem.[516]

After the suppression of the Cyril-Methodians, the Ukrainophile movement went into relative abeyance for the last, repressive years of Nicholas I's reign. The reign of the new Tsar, Alexander II, reopened the possibilities of Ukrainophile organization. In 1861, during the period of the Great Reforms, the Ukrainophile movement enjoyed a brief resurgence with the creation of the first Ukrainian hromada, which sought to return Ukrainians to their cultural roots. Although the hromada movement was caught up in the repression following the 1863-4 Polish Uprising, it was not completely snuffed out and became an important center of Ukrainophile activity in towns and cities throughout Ukraine.[517] In the early 1860s, the Ukrainophiles turned to education and church structures to transmit their message (and language). While not officially approved, the use of Ukrainian primers was also not explicitly banned by the Tsarist government, and the ability of primary education to inculcate Ukrainian identity was seen as crucial.[518]

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[515] Ibid. 67-8.
[516] Miller, *The Ukrainian Question*. 53-4.
[517] Yekelchyk, *Ukraine*. 42-5.
[518] Miller, *The Ukrainian Question*. 63-5.

However, during this period Russian nationalism was also on the rise, and the reemergence of Ukrainophilism was vulnerable to its influence both with the authorities and in the press. Mikhail Katkov, the noted Russian nationalist and publicist, undertook attacks on the Ukrainophiles in 1862-1863, criticizing fundraising for publishing popular works in Ukrainian, and finding all efforts at spreading another "Russian" language as subversive to the unity of the Russian nation. In 1863, his polemics successfully provoked Ukrainophiles to respond, and his equation of their movement with the Polish problems helped to spur the authorities to considering the Ukrainophiles as more of a dangerous movement than a harmless fancy of intellectuals.[519]

Katkov's argument, which helped to stimulate the decision to impose the notorious Valuev Edict in 1863, is interesting from the perspective of state-building in the Tsarist Empire. Russian nationalists like Katkov operated under the assumption that the process of state-building in the empire was not all that different from the process of state-building in Western European states. To support this assessment, he pointed to smaller communities within European states like the Scots or the Huguenots being successfully assimilated despite their desire for cultural autonomy.[520] For the supporters of the "All-Russian" project (which included a substantial number of Little Russian intellectuals who saw Ukraine and Russia as naturally linked), a core component of this assimilation was the submersion of regional dialects like Provencal or Celtic or other local vernaculars into "national" languages like French, English or Spanish. This comparison was politically useful for Russian nationalists, since for them it was obvious that Russian was the "national" language while Ukrainian was a quaint dialect that could not act as a basis for

[519] Ibid. 104-6.
[520] Ibid. 19-20.

an independent cultural existence.[521] Operating under this rubric, even though Ukrainophilism shared many characteristics and goals of the Russian nationalists (primarily a flavor of Pan-Slavism), its suppression was justified as in the case of the Cyril-Methodians because Ukraine having an "independent existence" was fundamentally inimical to the goals of the imperial state.[522] Nationalisms within the empire, such as could be found in the Baltics, Poland, and Finland, were a threat, but they were still outside the "national body" itself. In contrast, Ukrainian nationalism, even of a fairly mild variety, posed a potential "corruption" of the "national organism."[523]

The Valuev circular, issued in 1863, was the capstone of this scare concerning nationalist groups. The circular banned the publication of books in Ukrainian intended for popular audiences, though it did not address publications for specialist audiences, since it was only the spread of Ukrainian identity among the masses that was seen as threatening to Russian state interests.[524] Furthermore, unlike other imperial pronouncements concerning the borderlands, the Valuev edict was applied vigorously such that by 1871 the Ukrainian historian Mykola Kostamarov could claim that such publications had ceased to exist.[525] To understand the reasoning behind the Valuev edict, it is necessary to differentiate two strains of Ukrainophilism that emerged after the accession of Alexander II. The first strain, high-brow Ukrainophilism, was directed towards the purpose of converting Ukrainian into a literary language and developing high culture. This strain was represented by intellectuals like Kostamarov, Panteleimon Kulish (who published

[521] Miller, "Shaping Russian and Ukrainian Identities in the Russian Empire During the Nineteenth Century." 260.
[522] Luckyj, *Young Ukraine*. 77-8.
[523] Miller, *The Ukrainian Question*. 28.
[524] Ibid. 109.
[525] David Saunders, "Russia and Ukraine Under Alexander II: The Valuev Edict of 1863," *The International History Review* 17, no. 1 (February 1, 1995): 23–50. 24.

Notes on Southern Rus), and the various individuals behind the publication of the periodical *Osnova* (Foundation). Unlike with the Cyril-Methodians, this strain was seen as relatively harmless and was generally excluded from Tsarist repression during the 1860s (though this changed with the Ems Edict in the 1870s).[526] Quite simply, it was seen as involving so small a portion of the population of Ukraine that it was not a serious threat to state interests.

In contrast, the second strain of popular education in Ukrainian language and culture was seen as a serious threat to Tsarist state interests and the Russian national project. This strain of Ukrainophilism manifested itself in the foundation of local schools and Sunday schools that sought to teach the Ukrainian language in a more standardized fashion. These schools generally operated outside the control of the state and used primers written by Ukrainian intellectuals intended to increase awareness of Ukrainian identity, which was problematic given the Tsarist desire to place all social institutions under its administrative umbrella.[527] This strain was perceived as more of a threat to Tsarist interests because if the spread of Ukrainian was successful, then the mass of Ukrainian peasantry may start to believe that they possessed an identity that was significantly separate from the Great Russian identity, rather than being a branch of that identity.[528] The state and Russian nationalists viewed this possibility with trepidation because if the basis for loyalty to the state was going to shift to the nation after the Emancipation, the defection of Ukrainians from the Russian fold would threaten Russian predominance within the empire. As Dominic Lieven, Geoffrey Hoskings and others note, at this point Russians only comprised 44% of the empire's inhabitants, while

[526] Ibid. 32-3.
[527] Ibid. 36.
[528] Ibid. 27.

Ukrainians made up another 18%.[529] Or, as a Third Section report articulated the threat when considering a primer written by Shevchenko:

> The publication both of this booklet and of others like it, namely works written in Little Russian for the common people of Little Russia, betrays an intention... to call back to life the Little Russian nationality, the gradual and durable fusion of which with the Great Russian nationality into a single, indissoluble whole ought to be the subject of pacific but nevertheless constant endeavors on the part of the government... [I]n no way must the natural course of the *rapprochement* of the two peoples be obstructed and the government must not, by enlivening Little Russian speech and Little Russian literature, facilitate the emergence of that separation of the two related tribes which was once so fatal for both of them and which might even be dangerous from the point of view of the unity of the state.[530]

Toward this end, later in the 1860s, the government considered not only keeping in force a ban on instruction in Ukrainian, but also starting a proactive drive to spread Russian literacy through the funding and dispersion of Russian primers.[531]

By the mid-1870s, the Valuev circular was no longer viewed as effective enough for the purposes of the state. As a consequence, the state expanded its aim beyond strictly educational material to literature and other categories of writing. In 1875, a document was prepared for the Special Council on the Ukrainian question which argued that Ukrainian literature could not be compared to the development of something like a Latvian literature. While the Latvians could develop a national literature without threatening the integrity of the empire, this was not true for the 13 million Ukrainians who were part of the 'triune' concept of the Russian nation (Russian, Belorussian, Ukrainian). Any Ukrainian literature would by definition be a disunifying force.[532] This conclusion led directly to the implementation of the Ems Edict in 1875. The Ems Edict

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[529] Dominic Lieven, "Dilemmas of Empire 1850-1918. Power, Territory, Identity," *Journal of Contemporary History* 34, no. 2 (April 1999): 163–200. 185; Hosking, *Russia*. 378-380.
[530] Quoted in Saunders, "Russia and Ukraine Under Alexander II." 41.
[531] Miller, *The Ukrainian Question*. 134.
[532] Ibid. 180.

extended the goals of the Valuev Circular by banning all Ukrainian publishing outside of "historical documents" and "belles-lettres." Primers, orthographies, or any published material with a potential popular appeal were banned, and educational institutions were expected to "purify" their libraries. Alongside these proscriptions, the government also established a plan to patronize the Lvov newspaper *Slovo* as a Russifying mouthpiece, while Ukrainian publications like the Kievskii Telegraf were closed.[533] These kinds of Russifying measures characterized the later, more reactionary, period of Alexander II's reign, and would only be deepened by the reign of his successor, Alexander III.

Despite the stringency of Tsarist policies and their success in suppressing the Ukrainian movement in the short term, the state was nonetheless unsuccessful in inculcating a Russian identity in the broad mass of Ukrainians. This can mostly be traced to administrative limitations on the part of the state and Russia's relative economic position versus other European states that had successfully assimilated minority groups. During this time period, the Tsarist government was also crippled by an administrative lack of capacity in Ukraine (which was also not uncommon in others parts of the borderlands). The ratio of officials to the population as a whole was 1:1642, which compared unfavorably with even some far-flung European colonies. It fell dramatically short of the ratio observed in places like Great Britain, France, and Germany, which was roughly 1:141.[534] Furthermore, Miller judges that a key limitation on Tsarist assimilatory potential was that it lacked the resources that other European states like France had at their disposal during their own nation-building project. Schools, the military, and local government simply did not have the resources, the expertise, or the social status to

[533] Ibid. 183-4.
[534] Ibid. 143-4.

communicate Russian identity. The fact that the Tsarist government would not compromise its monopoly on power even after the emancipation severely hindered the potential emergence of autonomous social institutions that could contribute to nation-building.[535] In Western Europe, the cause of nation-building was aided by the fact that industrialization preceded national awakening, giving the state vital resources to pursue its goals. In Russia (and in other parts of Eastern Europe and also Austria-Hungary), industrialization followed or coincided with the emergence of nationalism, making adaptation on the part of the state very difficult.[536] Repression provided an alternate strategy, but as the experience of the borderlands indicates, it was a strategy with short-term benefits but diminishing returns.

National Awakening in the Baltics and Finland

The process of attempted cultural Russification in the Baltics and Finland highlights the shift from an imperial logic of governance to the logic of a centralized nation-state. The Baltic Germans and conservative Finnish elites were consistent servitors of Tsarist government and delivered social stability in their respective territories. This consistent service acted as the most important factor in explaining the relatively minimal administrative centralization, as the Tsarist state was loathe to undermine the loyalty of these elites. However, this service did little to protect the Baltics and Finland from more thoroughgoing efforts at cultural Russification in the latter half of the 19th century, as the government became more and more committed to a centralized state predicated on the

[535] Ibid. 255.
[536] Miller, "Shaping Russian and Ukrainian Identities in the Russian Empire During the Nineteenth Century." 262.

dominance of Great Russians. Although there were intermittent efforts under Nicholas I to privilege the status of the Russian language and Orthodoxy, these efforts were never carried through to their logical conclusion and were ineffective in replacing German or Swedish as the official language or Lutheranism as the privileged religion. This changed after the Crimean War and the Great Reforms, as the Tsarist state moved to bring autonomous regions not only under the administrative control of the center, but also under the influence of a desired national culture. Alexander III and Nicholas II both continued to pursue these policies, even as they disrupted the stability of these regions and undermined the loyalty of the elite strata. The metamorphosis of Finland from the most stable and loyal border region to a restive and tumultuous territory by the end of the 19th century especially epitomizes this dynamic.

After the Decembrist revolt, the censorship measures instituted in the Russian core were extended throughout the empire, though enforcement of the policies remained inconsistent with non-Russian language publications (which benefited the Baltics, as most publications were in German). The Third Section was also employed in the oversight of the dissent in the borderlands, but the numbers employed were rather minimal compared to the number of gendarmes in Moscow and Petersburg. Pressure was also applied through the Governors-General, which tended to be less sympathetic to autonomy and Baltic privileges during Nicholas' reign. One of the areas where the state pursued Russification measures (however modest) was in education. Uvarov's attempted reforms in the 1830s was an early form of educational Russification, with Baltic schools being forced to emphasize more Russian language training and the use of Russian instructors. The results of this program were mixed, as the gentry provided resistance, as

well as the Lutheran church.[537] The reason why education was targeted first and why the local elites resisted educational Russification so seriously was that the state identified education as an important source of Baltic autonomy and German identity. When the Baltics came into the Russian orbit, the empire lacked the resources to install a new educational infrastructure, and in any case, the education that already existed in the Baltics was generally superior to that available in Russia. As a result, education was left to the purview of the Baltic Germans and Lutheran pastors, which allowed the local elites to instill a distinctive identity in students in the borderlands.[538] By the 1840s, as part of the program of educational Russification, all students in the borderlands had to pass a Russian language exam, but in terms of practical effects the changes still existed mainly on the superficial level.[539]

Another sphere where the Tsarist state occasionally pursued Russification efforts was in the religious domain. Lutheran pastors retained substantial power in the Baltic territories, as they were not only deeply involved in educational institutions, but they were also responsible for producing documentation for their congregations to the Russian authorities, which they were permitted to do in German.[540] While not officially sanctioned, Tsarist authorities generally permitted the Lutheran religion to operate without interference in the Baltics, but this began changing in the 19th century as the state became more interested in not only administrative but also cultural Russification, and in cultivating a national ideology. Throughout the 19th century, there were several official and semi-official waves of Orthodox proselytism, which sought to undermine the

[537] Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870*. 172-5.
[538] Ibid. 109-112.
[539] Thaden, et al, *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914*. 22-4.
[540] Paul W. Werth, "In the State's Embrace? Civil Acts in an Imperial Order," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 7, no. 3 (2006): 433–458.

political power of the local elites. The peasantry, given their adversarial relationship with the Baltic Germans and the hope that conversion would open up economic opportunities, converted to Orthodoxy in significant numbers, but actual religious practice remained fairly superficial. Additional measures were instituted to consolidate this newfound Orthodox demographic, including the policy that children of mixed marriages needed to be raised in the Orthodox Church, while also formally forbidding conversion away from Orthodoxy (although, again, in practice this only drove conversions underground.)[541] During Nicholas' reign efforts at religious Russification were generally modest, but they set the precedent for the far more intrusive regulations that would be put in practice by succeeding governments which aimed to limit the sphere of influence of the Baltic Germans.[542]

After the end of Nicholas' reign, and especially after the Polish revolt in 1863, a couple different processes conspired to change the status quo in the Baltics and threaten the privileged position of the Baltic Germans. The first was the mobilization the Estonian and Latvian peasantry, which represented the emergence of a national consciousness among these previously politically "deactivated" parts of the populace. An educated national elite had already formed during the course of the 19th century, but it was only in the second half of the century and especially after 1880 that their message of nationalism infiltrated the population at large.[543] The national awakenings in the decades after 1850 among Latvians and Estonians challenged the traditional predominance of the Baltic German landowners, and prompted the landowners to petition Petersburg to protect them from such revolutionary elements. The Baltic populace in essence fractured along class

[541] Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870*. 176-80.
[542] Thaden, et al, *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914*. 121-2.
[543] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*. 221-3.

and ethnic lines.[544] These awakenings also posed a problem for the Tsarist state, as the 1850s and 1860s saw an increase in the number of peasant uprisings and general unrest in the Baltic territories, some of which required the military to suppress.[545]

The second process of importance was a more thoroughgoing approach to Russification on the part of the Tsarist state under Alexander II and his successors. Although Alexander II defended the Baltic Germans against nationalist polemics, and although Alexander II has the historical reputation for being a reformer while Nicholas I was a repressive autocrat, Alexander II's government was actually markedly harsher on the autonomy of the borderlands.[546] This took the form of more rigorous top-down Russification measures, but also sought to take advantage of the emerging rift between the Baltic Germans and the peasantry. Alexander II tried to break the pattern of Baltic German autonomy by introducing reforms designed to increase the use of Russian in education and administration, while also trying to bring Baltic institutions more in line with imperial laws.[547] This culminated in an edict in 1869 which dictated that all official business in the empire had to be conducted in Russian.[548] Municipal reforms in the 1870s attempted to impose new governing structures on the Baltics, with the intent of undermining the gentry's seat of political power, although the Baltic Germans were able to resist these measures enough to retain their traditional magistrates and guilds.[549] Alongside these measures, the state also implemented policies designed to improve the position of the peasantry vis-à-vis the Baltic Germans. Included among these were the

[544] Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*. 224.
[545] Thaden, et al, *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914*. 34-5.
[546] Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870*. 194-7.
[547] Ibid. 170.
[548] Thaden, at al, *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914*. 140-1.
[549] Ibid. 50-3.

abolition of the corvee, restrictions on corporal punishment, provisions for the creation of peasant self-government structures, and better protection under local judicial institutions.[550] At least in the short term, this divide and conquer tactic succeeded, as it managed to cultivate a welcoming attitude among Latvians and Estonians for Russification measures. By the late 1800s, all evidence indicates that the Estonian peasantry actually held strongly pro-Russian views, as they assumed that the Russians would eventually release them from the clutches of the Baltic Germans. This perspective was shared by the emerging national intelligentsia, which associated Russification measures with the erosion of Baltic German privileges and the opening up of new political space for ethnic Latvians and Estonians.[551] In the long term, Russification policies jumpstarted processes of ethnic mobilization that would ultimately undermine the coherence of Tsarist rule and help contribute to the revolutionary situation in the early 20th century.

The next stage of Russification in the Baltics occurred during the reign of Alexander III, who was more committed to Russian nationalism and Russification than his father. The impetus for this stage was the inspection of the Baltic territories by Russian Senator Nikolai Manasein, and his proposals for deepening Russian control of the region. Some of the first measures undertaken to deepen Russification in the Baltics was to reinforce the use of Russian as an official language. This policy had already been instituted in 1850, but had been poorly implemented, necessitating closer oversight and enforcement on the part of the Tsarist state. Senator Manasein's proposals for linguistic Russification in the early 1880s were formalized in 1885 and 1889 ukases instituting the

[550] Ibid. 39-41.
[551] Ibid. 296-301.

mandatory use of Russian in regional and municipal government. Manasein's proposals in education were similar, with the use of Russian in seminaries and elementary schools emphasized, as well as making Russian (rather than German) the official language of instruction at the University of Dorpat.[552] The state also moved to reinvigorate religious Russification in the 1880s, with families of mixed religion required to raise children in the Orthodox Church and with a renewed drive towards Orthodox conversion. For a brief time period Lutheran pastors could be prosecuted for violating the religious standards of the empire, but this was deemphasized in the 1890s as the state toned down the religious side of Russification.[553]

These efforts to expand Russification in the Baltics proved to be temporary, although they nevertheless succeeded in alienating substantial segments of the Baltic population (the Baltic Germans remained loyal because they realized their position relied on the continued patronage of the state, but the Tsarist autocracy had little means to cope with the escalating nationalism in the region). Manasein also intended to eliminate the institutional basis of Baltic German hegemony, but the state was obviously not willing to jettison this last tenuous link of traditional imperial policy. Towards this end, Manasein proposed the reorganization of the Baltic *guberniia*, with the three regions being replaced by two centered on Latvian and Estonian language divisions. The proposal was intended to subvert the influence of German and to provide an administrative apparatus for local zemstvos, but the proposal was not acted on by Petersburg.[554] Other Russification measures slackened in the 1890s as the state stopped short of abandoning the Baltic Germans in order to cultivate the support of Latvian and Estonian peasants. Russification

[552] Ibid. 57-9.
[553] Ibid. 67-8.
[554] Ibid. 65-6.

continued in education, but was halted or reversed in other areas as the Baltic Germans successfully retained most of their influence in local government.[555] The tragedy of these policy changes (at least from the perspective of the state) was that they effectively abandoned the national movements that the state had helped create as part of the divide-and-conquer strategy, leaving those movements with little reason to remain loyal to the state in the long-term. Some of the more radical segments of the Baltic national movements helped to contribute to the revolutionary agitation before and after 1917.

Russification in Finland occurred later than in any other of the borderlands, and during the time period when the other regions were feeling the heavy hand of Tsarist rule Finland was actually succeeding in carving out more political autonomy. This success can be largely attributed to the deft maneuvering of Finland's political class and the rise of a Fennoman movement that sought to define a Finnish identity separate from both the Swedish past and the Russian present. The Fennoman movement originated in the first half of the 19th century, largely as a result of conflict between Finnish speakers and the Swedish speakers that dominated the Grand Duchy's elite. However, the Fennoman movement also came to view Russian rule as restrictive even if it was relatively lenient, laying the groundwork for the idea of a separate Finnish nation.[556] Although not recognized as the official language of Finland, Finnish became increasingly important over the last decades of the 19th century, with a significant number of Finnish language private schools opened during the time period. The ability to conduct this kind of low-level nationalist campaign, which embraced more than half of Finnish students by

[555] Ibid. 70-1.
[556] Ibid. 366.

century's end, helped to consolidate the idea of the Finnish nation.[557] On the political side, Finland entrenched its autonomy through the maintenance of a separate military infrastructure, a separate monetary system, and retention of control over educational institutions. One of the greatest successes of Finnish autonomy was concession by Alexander II that allowed Finland to maintain a regular Diet, which had not been convened since the reign of Alexander I. Although unimpressive compared to other European parliaments, the Finnish Diet Act of 1869 established the permanency of the representative body, with the Diet to be convened every five years. The Diet lacked extensive formal powers, but it did provide a forum for political discussion and push for reform.[558]

Despite these achievements, however, Finland's autonomy drew the ire of both government officials and nationalist journalists during the second half of the 19th century, who viewed Finnish autonomy as an outdated arrangement that needed to be revisited. Fears that Sweden may take advantage of Russian weakness during the Crimean War helped to contribute to an atmosphere in Petersburg that overemphasized the separatist threat in Finland. As C. Leonard Lundin notes, this led to the paradoxical situation where Russian efforts to curb the perceived separatist threat served to create the discontent that fueled separatist ambitions.[559] The extremist nationalist press in Russia helped to reinforce this fear of Finnish separatism, as these organs attacked Finland's position in the final decade of the 19th century. Some of the military men who became responsible for Finnish policy also wrote for these publications, and the government of

[557] Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*. 118-9.
[558] Ibid. 108-9.
[559] Thaden, at al, *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914*. 373-4.

Nicholas II was loathe to question such nationalist positions.[560] This fear of Finnish separatism culminated in the appointment of Nikolai Bobrikov as Governor-General in 1898, a man who was committed to eliminating Finnish autonomy. Upon being appointed Governor-General, Bobrikov targeted several areas for reform that would increase Russian control over Finland. These included the integration of the armed forces, the weakening of the State Secretary and the strengthening of the Governor-General, the abolition of separate customs and monetary systems, and the introduction of Russian into government administration and the school system.[561] These initiatives set the stage for increasing imperial intrusion and the beginnings of serious conflict between the Finns and imperial officials.

One of Bobrikov's first moves, with the approval of the Tsar, was to curtail the political autonomy that Finland had accumulated in key institutions like the Diet and the State Secretary. The February Manifesto outlined a series of legal changes that shifted legislative authority away from the Diet and towards the corresponding Russian minister and the Tsar. The Diet and other Finnish institutions were to be reduced to an advisory role and Finnish autonomy was to be thoroughly compromised.[562] The Manifesto prompted a political crisis in Finland, as many Finnish senators resigned in protest over the order to promulgate the manifesto and were subsequently replaced by officials deemed more likely to be compliant with imperial designs. Given the impotence of their governing institutions to resist the changes, Finnish civil society mobilized to formally protest imperial policy with the hope of lobbying the Tsar to reverse the changes. The Finns composed the Great Address objecting to the changes and garnered over half a

[560] Ibid. 381.
[561] Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*. 128-9.
[562] Thaden, et al, *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914*. 420-1.

million signatures to present to the Tsar. The Tsar refused to meet with the representatives presenting the address, and when it was finally routed through the proper channels (mainly Bobrikov), the Tsar only indicated that no action was to be taken to address the concerns.[563] The Russian autocracy had little regard for the political activities of civic groups (including even loyal Russian groups), and by dismissing the Great Address the state served to radicalize an important segment of the Finnish populace. Additional Russification was undertaken with the Language and Army Manifestos, which were not even written with the minimal consultation required by the February Manifesto. The Language Manifesto sought to make Russian into the official language of Finland, despite the considerable difficulties in implementing such a measure. The Army Manifesto abolished Finland's separate military establishment and subjected Finns to military service in the Tsarist army for the first time.[564]

In addition to the Finnish governing elites and civil society, the Tsarist state also had to deal with two other groups it had difficulty placating. The first group was Finland's peasantry, which had little love for Finland's Swedish-speaking elite or the educated Fennoman movement. A Tsarist tactic was to cultivate discontent among the Finnish peasantry towards the elites, mainly through the use of propaganda and limited financial inducements. However, Russia's own vexing agrarian problem prevented the state from taking more extensive measures and the program met with only limited success.[565] Compared to a similar effort in the Baltics where the state succeeded in gaining some support from Latvian and Estonian peasants, Tsarist efforts to divide the Finnish populace were a failure. The state had even greater problems dealing with the

[563] Ibid. 425-7.
[564] Ibid. 438-9.
[565] Ibid. 432-3.

second group, organized labor. The development of a labor movement coincided with the rise of nationalism in Finland and contributed an undercurrent of labor discontent to the agitation for Finnish status. This divided different factions in the Finnish movement, but it also served to mobilize the lower classes against the conservative strata that had been in power in Finland for decades.[566] Compared to the other borderland regions, Finland had a militant and well-established labor movement by the early decades of the 20th century. The alienation of the most important social groups in Finland helps to explain the rise of more violent and radical means to resisting Russian rule. Borrowing a page from the Russian terrorist playbook, Finnish nationalists targeted key officials for assassination. The assassination of Bobrikov by a Finnish nationalist in 1904, followed shortly by the assassination of Plehve (Finnish State Secretary as well as Tsarist Interior Minister) by a Russian group a few weeks later marked a significant blow against the forces of Russification in Finland.[567]

By the late 1800s when the Tsarist state was beginning to pursue Russification in a more thorough manner, the Third Section no longer existed, though its functions had been replicated in similar policing institutions. However, the army remained the most important repressive force in the borderlands, though obviously more important in places like Poland where Russian rule was actively militarized. Elsewhere in the empire, Russification also took unofficial form, as in the Black Hundreds and pogroms in Ukraine and Poland. This remains beyond the scope of the present study. In the Baltics and Finland, the increasing restiveness of the local populaces (a function of their "national awakening") made the implementation of Russification more repressive and conflict-

[566] Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*. 137.
[567] Ibid. 141.

ridden, with the first decade of the 20th century featuring summary judgments against those who resisted imperial designs. The last couple decades of the Tsarist Empire's existence demonstrated the weakness of the state's Russification policy, as hitherto stable and quiescent regions such as the Baltics and Finland became hotbeds of radicalism and resistance to Tsarist rule.

Erasing Poland

In contrast to the other borderland regions where administrative and cultural Russification were pursued over different time periods (though overlapping), Russification in Poland-Lithuania generally combined these two strands. A reason that can be adduced to explain this discrepancy concerns the different position that the Tsarist state held vis-a-vis the Poles when compared to other borderland populations. Although the state considered the autonomy carved out by other border regions to be dangerous to the unity of the state, the historical rivalry between Poland and Russia led to distrust of the Poles and concerns over potential treason. The experiences of 1830-1 and 1863-4 only served to heighten these fears, making the primary goal of Russification the erosion of Polish identity and culture. In Poland itself this took the form of persecution of Catholicism and the Polish *szlachta*, and the symbolic elimination of the name of Poland (replaced by the term 'Vistula region' after the second insurrection). In Lithuania, it took the form of active efforts to disseminate Russian culture and the Orthodox religion and a commensurate effort to attack anything that was viewed as Polish in origin. Although Russification efforts were occasionally relaxed, after the end of the Congress Kingdom

experiment Russification in Poland-Lithuania was markedly harsher (and more violent) than in the other parts of the borderlands.

The 1830 November Insurrection and its eventual quashing by Russian forces definitively ended the Congress Kingdom experiment, but given the views of Nicholas I it is likely that the arrangement would have been revisited eventually. Nicholas considered the creation of a semi-independent Polish kingdom as a 'regrettable' mistake and believed that it had weakened rather than strengthened Russia's borders. A new partition would likely have been preferable, but the 1830 rebellion offered him a perfect pretext to do away with this independence and to seek to squash the dangerous effects of nationality.[568] After all, as previously mentioned it was during Nicholas' reign that the Tsarist state reconsidered its traditional methods of integrating non-Russian territories and moved towards a policy that increasingly emphasized the deleterious effects of nationality and the necessity for Russification, even if these policies were not consistently followed until the late 19th century. Nicholas inherently distrusted the Poles, and sought to find methods that would erode their 'Polishness' and replace it with a more loyal 'Russianess'. This explains why during Nicholas' early reign, he attempted to expose Polish officials and elites to 'good' Russian influence by incorporating Poles in the Western borderlands into the imperial military and civil service systems. This represented an overly optimistic (and perhaps naive) approach of *sliianie*, or the bringing together of the two nations. When this approach failed to take hold and Poles throughout the empire persisted in their distinctive identity, *sliianie* gave way to the more vigorous Russification

[568] Presni□akov, *Emperor Nicholas I of Russia, the Apogee of Autocracy, 1825-1855*. 48-50.

that would define the post 1830-1 period.[569] Alongside this goal of converting Poles into loyal imperial subjects was a corresponding fear of the undermining influence of Polonism. The Pole was viewed with suspicion by Tsarist officialdom as an inevitable participant in sedition, treason, or other activities that worked to sap the empire of its vigor.[570] This perspective came to color all official policies concerning Poland and undoubtedly played a role in the harshness of the repression that followed the November Insurrection.

This fear of the corrupting influence of Polonism also drove imperial policy in the Lithuanian lands, where uprisings also occurred, although not to the same extent or with the same organization as in the Polish core. This set the stage for what would become a prevailing concern of Russification policy in the Lithuanian lands: cleansing the Lithuanians of pernicious Polish influence and bringing them into the Russian fold. Cultural Russification measures implemented in the Lithuanian lands after the uprising included the encouragement of conversion to Orthodoxy, the forbidding of converting from Orthodoxy, and the expectation that interfaith marriages would raise children as Orthodox. The University of Vilna was closed, and Russian replaced all other languages as the language of official business and eventually school instruction.[571] A distinctively Russian university was founded in Kiev to replace the University of Vilna as the educational center of the region and the Tsarist education ministry exerted strong control over the character of the education promoted there. And although the Catholic Church was not proscribed, a number of Catholic monasteries that were judged to have a

[569] Patrice M. Dabrowski, "Russian-Polish Relations Revisited, or The ABC's of 'Treason' Under Tsarist Rule," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 4, no. 1 (2003): 177–199. 186.
[570] Ibid. 189.
[571] Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*. 205-6.

deleterious impact on the loyalty of Lithuania were suppressed. Finally, the Tsarist government repudiated one of the central hopes of the Polish-Lithuanian lands when Nicholas specifically rejected the possibility that Poland and Lithuania might one day be reunited as a single political unit. The Lithuanian Corps were abolished and Poles within the Lithuanian government were vigorously purged since Polonism was viewed as a primary influence undermining Tsarist control.[572]

The measures implemented by the state in the Lithuanian lands laid the groundwork for the ethnoreligious conflict that in a large way drove the development of the Lithuanian national movement in the late 19th century. The change in terminology that the government of Nicholas I used to describe the Lithuanian territories after the insurrection demonstrates this, as Mikhail Muraviev (later Governor-General and "hangman" of Vilna) referred to the territories as "eternally Russian land."[573] Heinz-Dietrich Lowe argues that the most important measures that served to alienate the Lithuanians after the uprising were the anti-Catholic and Uniate measures, part of which included the forcible conversion of the Uniates to Orthodoxy and a ban on leaving the Russian Orthodox Church.[574] Some of the Russification measures were softened after the Russian defeat in the Crimean War, as the government of Alexander II saw the benefit in cultivating a better relationship with the Lithuanian gentry. However, this relaxation was minimal and was of course subsequently terminated by the 1863-4 uprising, which

[572] Thackeray, *Antecedents of Revolution*. 138-9.
[573] Staliunas, "Did the Government Seek to Russify Lithuanians and Poles in the Northwestern Region after the Uprising of 1863-64?". 276.
[574] Lowe, "Poles, Jews, and Tartars." 68-9.

convinced the Tsarist state that there could be no accommodation in the Polish and Lithuanian lands.[575]

The response of the Russian authorities after the 1863-4 rebellion was harsher than the response in 1830-1, despite there being a more progressive Tsar in power. The first step was the reversal of the Alexander II's earlier concessions and a return to close Russian control over the rebellious territories. Poles were once again expelled from government offices, although this policy was not as total as Russification advocates would have desired. Although Poles were replaced by Russians in all the highest-ranking posts within education, the judiciary, the police, and economic departments, Russian officials generally avoided lower-ranked (and therefore lower-prestige) positions, which were left to Polish officials. As Dobrowski notes, even though the goal of the Tsarist state after the 1863-4 rebellion was the complete administrative Russification of Poland, over 50% of officials remained Catholic or Polish when it was measured in 1897.[576] As with the limitations of Tsarist power in the Baltics and Finland, even in a place like Poland where Russia sought to exercise its sovereign authority, a relative dearth of skilled officials made the realization of those goals problematic. Russia could suppress Poland, but it proved incapable of transforming it entirely.

Alongside these attempted measures, the state also took symbolic steps to undermine the legitimacy of the Polish national idea, by completely eliminating the name "Poland" and renaming the territory as the "Vistula Lands" (a resurrection of one of the objectives of the original partitions).[577] Moreover, not only was Russian reasserted as the

[575] Staliunas, "Did the Government Seek to Russify Lithuanians and Poles in the Northwestern Region after the Uprising of 1863-64?". 277.
[576] Dabrowski, "Russian-Polish Relations Revisited, or The ABC's of 'Treason' Under Tsarist Rule." 192.
[577] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*. 253-4.

official language of government administration, but Tsarist authorities also sought to actively drive Polish out of public life, including the banning of instruction in Polish and the use of Polish in signage.[578] Finally, the policy of cooperation with local elites was completely abandoned in Poland after 1863-4, and the Catholic Church was treated with hostility and discriminatory policies, alongside the forced conversion of Uniates. However, emancipation was offered to peasants on generous terms, partly to place Russia as their protector and deepen the divide between the sectors of the Polish populace.[579] Perversely, the repression in Poland caused the situation in regions like the Baltics and Finland to improve, as the Tsar sought to buttress support in the borderlands and fend off criticism of Russian despotism in the borderlands. As a result, the 1860s was marked by the strange duality of the repression and Russification of Poland and Lithuania alongside increasingly lenient and flexible policies in the Baltics and Finland.[580]

The reaction to the uprising in the Lithuanian lands was similar. Leading up to 1863, Tsarist officials had attempted to separate Lithuania from the influence of Polish culture, so as to inoculate the region against a repeat of 1830-1. The management of ethnic minorities in the Hapsburg Empire partly served as a model, as the government sought to strengthen ethnic communities without their own social elites, so as to play them off against the Polish-influenced Lithuanian elites. The hope was that by acting as a patron of these smaller ethnic communities, the Tsarist state could inculcate a sense of loyalty in them and remove a vital base of support for rebellious activities. This kind of policy was pursued as late as 1862, in a proposal to establish a network of schools

[578] Staliunas, "Did the Government Seek to Russify Lithuanians and Poles in the Northwestern Region after the Uprising of 1863-64?". 284.
[579] Hosking, *Russia*. 376-7.
[580] Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870*. 225-8.

dedicated to teaching "folk" languages and cultures.[581] This was a tactic that would also be employed in the other borderlands once the Tsarist state definitively turned to Russification under Alexander III, but it was only partly successful in the case of Lithuania. When the rebellion broke out in Poland in 1863, uprisings also occurred in the Lithuanian (and Belorussian) lands, but there were divisions between the Poles and the Lithuanians, with the latter viewing the former as yet another potential oppressor. The failure of the uprising, and the subsequent repression under Muraviev, saw over a hundred executed, almost a thousand sentenced to forced labor, and thousands more deported, generally to Siberia. Lithuania was renamed the "Northwest Province" and stifling measures were applied to the cultural and educational realm.[582] After the uprising, the objective was no longer to convert Lithuanians into loyal Orthodox Russians, but simply to forcibly remove them from Polish influence, with the previous measures being viewed as inadequate to the task. As Staliunas notes, Tsarist authorities did not even necessarily view Lithuanians (who were mainly peasants) as an ethnic community "capable of reaching civilized norms," unlike other ethnic communities like the Baltic Germans who demonstrated a higher degree of development.[583]

Although the measures taken in Lithuania after the 1863-4 uprising were harsh, they were still fundamentally directed towards the goal of inoculating the Lithuanians against pernicious Polish influence. This manifested itself in efforts to bring Lithuanian culture into the Russian orbit, but it also underestimated the vitality of the Lithuanian

[581] Mikhail Dolbilov, "Russification and the Bureaucratic Mind in the Russian Empire's Northwestern Region in the 1860s," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 2 (2004): 245–271. 270.
[582] Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*. 235-7.
[583] Staliunas, "Did the Government Seek to Russify Lithuanians and Poles in the Northwestern Region after the Uprising of 1863-64?". 288-9.

national movement, which was viewed as mostly harmless to Tsarist interests. The changes that Governor-General Muraviev instituted were mainly in the areas of education and religion, which were viewed as areas of Polish strength. In 1864 he ordered that all Lithuanian textbooks be rendered in Cyrillic rather than Latin letters, and by 1865 this order had been extended to a ban on any publications in the traditional alphabet.[584] Muraviev also closed the majority of Lithuanian secondary schools, since many of these institutions were run by either Polish elites or the Catholic Church, with the predictable negative effect on Lithuanian educational development.[585] These educational changes occurred alongside efforts to control Lithuanian religious life, including a renewed effort at Orthodox proselytism, the confiscation of Catholic Church property, and the placing of the Church under direct government supervision.[586] Conversion to Orthodoxy was in fact the only way that Lithuanians could qualify for normal rights and privileges, as it was viewed as sufficient evidence that the individual was becoming more "Russian." Converting to Orthodoxy had the significant benefit of opening up occupational opportunities for teachers and civil servants and also carried with it a reduction in taxation.[587]

Nevertheless, the Tsarist state did not evince much concern about Lithuanian culture outside of what was perceived as Polish influence. The continued economic and political dominance of the Polish elite masked the growing strength of the Lithuanian national movement and its orientation against both Polish and Russian influence.[588]

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[584] Ibid. 284.
[585] Lowe, "Poles, Jews, and Tartars." 70.
[586] Ibid. 69.
[587] Staliunas, "Did the Government Seek to Russify Lithuanians and Poles in the Northwestern Region after the Uprising of 1863-64?". 280-1.
[588] Theodore R. Weeks, "Russification and the Lithuanians, 1863-1905," *Slavic Review* 60, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 96–114. 107.

Russian chauvinism about the non-viability of the Lithuanian nation helped to feed this myopia. Government officials perceived increasing conflict between Poles and Lithuanians in the last couple decades of the 19th century, but because they were still viewing the region through the anti-Polish lens of Tsarist policy, they judged that the growth of the Lithuanian movement was actually a positive development and held no danger for Tsarist interests.[589] As Theodore Weeks argues, the combination of selective repression and official neglect was an important impetus behind the ability of the Lithuanian national movement to build up its strength and put itself in the position of being able to maintain a separate political existence.[590] Although the Tsarist state maintained the posture that Lithuania was an eternally Russian land, relatively few resources were directed towards making this an administrative reality.

A key difference between the repression and Russification following the 1830 Insurrection and that following the 1863-4 rebellion was the newfound emphasis on nationalism, especially among ethnic Russians. Russian ethno-nationalism, promoted by individuals like Mikhail Katkov and some officials within the Tsarist government, represented a serious challenge to the traditional Tsarist policy of cooperating with and co-opting local elites and emphasizing loyalty over identity. Even though the Tsarist government was to some degree fearful of nationalism (being a phenomena that they could not necessarily control), it influenced the policies of how to deal with the borderlands and especially in places like Poland it emphasized that Poles were an "enemy nation" that was not capable of being fully assimilated into the empire.[591] Katkov, through his organ *Moskovskie vedomosti* (Russian News) emphasized linguistic

[589] Ibid. 110.
[590] Ibid. 114.
[591] Kappeler, “The Ambiguities of Russification.” 293-4.

assimilation as important above all else, meaning not only the active promotion of Russian, but also the active suppression of other tongues.[592] This can perhaps help to explain the emphasis on language policies in the borderlands during the second half of the 19th century. Katkov's account of the nation, or narodnost, also emphasized the survival of the fittest character of competing nationalisms. Under his rubric of nation-building all distinct nations should strive for political autonomy, but not all will be successful. Poland had failed in its bid for an independent political existence while Russia had succeeded and expanded, therefore it was only natural that the Polish narodnost should be absorbed into the greater Russian nation. Any allowance of an independent Poland at this stage would only threaten the "peaceful development" of the successful Russian nation.[593]

This conflict between the traditional imperial logic and the modern national logic produced inconsistencies and contradictions in Tsarist Russification strategies. Although the ostensible goal of Russification was to produce loyal subjects among the non-Russian peoples (by inculcating them with Russian linguistic and cultural norms), in the case of Poland and to some degree Lithuania Russification policies seemed to amount more to segregationist strategies rather than assimilationist. Poles were specifically proscribed from taking up careers as teachers and civil servants (though as the previously cited statistics indicate, this was not completely effective), and a quota policy was put into force in Russian educational establishments in 1864 where no more than 10% of the

[592] Staliunas, "Did the Government Seek to Russify Lithuanians and Poles in the Northwestern Region after the Uprising of 1863-64?". 280.
[593] Andreas Renner, "Defining a Russian Nation: Mikhail Katkov and the 'Invention' of National Politics," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 81, no. 4 (October 1, 2003): 659–682. 670.

student body could be "persons of Polish descent" (or, to a lesser extent, Catholic Lithuanians).[594] Moreover, as Kappeler notes,

> Other contradictions abound. Most bureaucrats advocated support for Orthodoxy and the Russian language, but they distrusted autonomous initiatives by Russian society (e.g. the Orthodox brotherhoods) that pursued the same aims but were not under their control. Sometimes, officials in the borderlands sided with the peasant peoples in their grievances against the Poles, whereas the imperial center opposed supporting primitive peasant cultures. There were also disparities between the different agencies of the Russian government and between particular officials or between officials and publicists.[595]

The Tsar and high government officials did not seek to resolve these contradictions, as that would have implied choosing a side in the conflict between the different sources of loyalty in the empire. Cultivating national pride and support was useful, especially after the emancipation of serfs in the early 1860s, but the traditional imperial policy still yielded favorable results in the Baltics and Finland.

The remainder of the 19th century displayed the extension of Russification and the increasing importance of ethnic identity. The assassination of Alexander II in 1881 convinced Alexander III to reconsider Baltic rights and privileges and apply a gentler version of the Russification experienced in Poland-Lithuania in 1863-4. This included closer administrative Russification, book bans, closer police oversight, teaching and administrative conducted in Russian, and active Orthodox proselytism.[596] As detailed in the previous section, this strategy failed even in the formerly compliant Baltic states and Finland, as the processes of national awakening undermined the basis of Tsarist rule and the turn to nationalism by the Tsarist state only exacerbated the tensions. In many ways, the processes triggered in the last couple decades of the 19th century, and which

[594] Staliunas, "Did the Government Seek to Russify Lithuanians and Poles in the Northwestern Region after the Uprising of 1863-64?". 284.
[595] Kappeler, "The Ambiguities of Russification." 293.
[596] Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States*. 256-260.

ultimately culminated in the nationalities problem that faced Nicholas II in the first two decades of the 20th century, can be seen the spread of the type of problem that the Tsarist state had been experiencing in Poland since the beginning of the 19th century. Whereas the Baltic Germans initially embraced the leverage offered by Tsarist rule to reinforce their own rule, the Polish *szlachta* rejected the same offer because their corporate identity had already formed in a manner inimical to Russian interests.

According the Kappeler, Russia's problems with Poland can also be traced to Poland's own transformation over the course of the 19th century. Initially, the 'noble's republic' only faced the empire with the prickly and noncompliant *szlachta*, but the repressions after 1831 and 1864 helped to mobilize the rest of the people and transform Poland into a more modern nation. The abolition of serfdom, the persecution of the Catholic Church, and other Russification measures served to create a larger body of Poles who could identify themselves as such vis-a-vis the Tsarist authorities. In this way, the measures used to contain Poland actually helped to expedite the national problem of the empire.[597] The inconsistency of the Tsarist bureaucracy concerning Russification and the lack of coordination among different government agencies guaranteed that the state was unable to adequately address the problems in the borderlands, forcing regional officials to construct ad hoc policies that didn't necessarily match up with the official policies emanating from Petersburg. The fundamental approach of the bureaucracy, that of reacting to situations as they arose, prevented it from systematically imposing a policy of assimilation.[598] The confused mixture of autonomy with Russification proved to be a

[597] Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*. 218-9.
[598] Dolbilov, "Russification and the Bureaucratic Mind in the Russian Empire's Northwestern Region in the 1860s." 247.

worse policy for the stability of the empire than decisively pursuing either the strategy of regional autonomy or thorough Russification.

Conclusion

The evolution of Tsarist policy in the borderlands from accommodation to Russification mirrors a broader shift in the state's perception of the empire's inhabitants. The transformation of the term *inorodtsy* over the course of the 19th century captures this shift and indicates the growing importance of ethnic and cultural identity in the empire in its last few decades. As John Slocum observes, the legal category of inorodtsy originated in the 1822 *Ustav* that set out the obligations of these groups to the state (although usage of the term predated the *Ustav*). The *Ustav* established the inorodtsy as the Eastern nomadic or wandering peoples of the empire, who were for the moment incapable of being fully assimilated. It laid down special taxes that these groups had to pay (primarily the *iasak*, but also local taxes) and the terms of administration, which was usually done indirectly through existing tribal or clan structures.[599] Over the 19th century, the legal view of the inorodtsy also acquired the aura of a threat, as the inorodtsy were no longer simply the inassimilable in the Russian hinterlands, but also danger to imperial unity. The goal therefore became assimilating the inorodtsy to eliminate the threat, but the perception of alienness raised the possibility that such assimilation was impossible.[600] As identity became more closely associated with language in the latter half of the 19th century (and linguistic Russification was indeed the overriding concern of many Russian

[599] John W. Slocum, "Who, and When, Were the Inorodtsy? The Evolution of the Category of 'Aliens' in Imperial Russia," *Russian Review* 57, no. 2 (April 1, 1998): 173–190. 180.
[600] Ibid. 184.

nationalists), the concept of inorodtsy expanded beyond its simple legal definition to eventually encompass all non-Russian ethnic groups within the empire (with the exception of Eastern Slavic groups like the Ukrainians and Belorussians). Whereas groups like the Finns, Poles, Baltic Germans, Armenians and others had previously been viewed as members of the empire, they gradually became lumped into the category of the alien "other."[601]

The evolution of the concept of inorodtsy was hardly a development that the Tsarist state viewed favorably, as it represented an assault on the ability of the state to define the parameters of loyal imperial citizenship. Nicholas I's ambivalence towards cultural Russification demonstrates the discomfort the state felt when it tinkered with the traditional formula of imperial patriotism, which had allowed the inclusion of non-Russian groups and cultivated the loyalty of those groups to the overarching goals of the imperial state. As Jeremy Renner argues, although Russian nationalism was indisputably loyal to the state, it was also extremely dangerous since it sought to redefine the terms of imperial membership and supersede the traditional understanding of the autocracy.[602] This serves to explain the state's original antipathy towards groups such as the Slavophiles, because although they were conservative monarchists, the kind of empire they envisioned conflicted with Tsarist goals. The "Westerner" opposition also shared this nation-oriented worldview, due largely to the influence of German philosophy, such that reform-minded intelligentsia like Boris Chicerin could speak about creating a "Russlandic" nation that would concentrate on the "inner unity" of the Russian people.[603] Thus, the shifting definition of inorodtsy can be seen as evidence of the failure of the

[601] Ibid. 186.
[602] Renner, “Defining a Russian Nation.” 663.
[603] Ibid. 666.

state to respond to these pressures, which in the last decades of the 19th century forced Tsarism to link itself with Russian nationalism in the face of rising non-Russian nationalisms throughout the empire.[604] As this chapter demonstrates, this strategy failed even in the most compliant of the borderland regions, as efforts to create a broader Russian nation only served to kindle the kinds of movements that the state feared in the first place.

Even as the state shifted into more coercive Russification policies in the second half of the 19th century, these policies varied depending on the constellation of factors surrounding the position of the borderland elites. The elites were not able to successfully defend autonomy to the same extent as during earlier processes of administrative centralization, but they were nevertheless able to influence whether the Tsarist state pursued strictly coercive policies or policies premised on quasi-voluntary compliance. The effect of the two Polish insurrections of the 19th century was that the state no longer entertained the notion that accommodation would work in Poland or Lithuania and instead moved to quarantine 'treasonous' Polish influence. This goal was pursued through segregationist and discriminatory policies and was only partly successful, as the empire lacked the requisite number of Russian officials to take over previously Polish-held offices. In Ukraine, coercion was employed by default, as there were no longer elite intermediaries to negotiate with due to the defection of the starshyna and the weakness of the Ukrainophile intellectuals. Additionally, Russian perceptions of Ukraine prevented any possible acknowledgement of a separate Ukrainian identity. Conversely, in the Baltics and Finland Russification was at least somewhat moderated by the continuing presence of compliant elites, even if these elites no longer completely dominated their

[604] Slocum, "Who, and When, Were the Inorodtsy?". 174.

respective regions due to the emergence of ethnic nationalist movements. Serious Russification measures were undertaken linguistically, religiously, and educationally, but their actual impact was limited due to less-than-rigorous enforcement and local elite resistance. Local elite strength and orientation was clearly less important at this late stage of the Tsarist Empire, but it nevertheless made a discernible impact on government policy in the borderlands.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters have established four separate phases of Tsarist policy in the Western borderlands of the empire. These phases reflected the evolution of the traditional imperial logic to a more state-based approach to governance, with the evolution propelled by the changing geopolitical context of Europe and the pressures of military competition. The progression of the phases also helps to demonstrate the extent (and limitations) of the penetration of Tsarist power in these regions, and the way in which the breadth and depth of state power projection dictated the success or failure of policy in the borderlands. The first phase of Tsarist policy in the borderlands covered the period of the initial incorporation of the regions into the empire and the degree of autonomy afforded to the regions. Tsarist assurances of political and cultural autonomy were predicated on the relative inability of the state to directly administer these territories and the need to secure dynastic loyalty in the face of ongoing geopolitical threats (whether from Sweden or Poland or Prussia). The second phase of cooperation with local elites followed closely on the incorporation agreements and sought to establish a reliable administrative class to help serve Tsarist interests in the borderlands. The effort to integrate these local elites into the Tsarist governing apparatus (either civilian or military) was intended to secure loyalty by offering lucrative paths of political and economic advancement. Both of these first two phases conform to the logic of an empire extending its territory to protect its heartland and cultivating local clients for the purpose of indirect rule (since direct rule was too costly and impractical).

The third phase signaled a shift away from this decentralized pattern of imperial rule towards a more centralized state. The impetus for this shift originated in military necessity, with the Tsarist state seeking more resources to keep up with European military developments. Peter I's reforms led the way in this regard, with an effort to overhaul civilian and military infrastructure to increase the extractive capacity of the state (both in terms of economic assets and manpower), but the reforms were incomplete and were inconsistently reinforced by the later governments of Catherine II, Alexander I, and Nicholas I. In the borderlands this process took the form of creeping administrative centralization, a greater presence of Russian officials, and the harmonization of regional policy with the official policy of the center. The degree to which this centralization progressed depended largely on the character of the state's relationship with the local elite (positive relationships yielded less harsh centralization and vice-versa) and the ability of those elites to resist imperial policy. The final phase represented the logical conclusion of the shift to a state-centered political system, as prior administrative centralization was deemed insufficient and any form of regional autonomy was judged a threat to the cohesion of the empire as a whole. This phase, Russification, moved beyond the boundaries of administrative centralization and sought to reconstruct the multi-ethnic imperial state as a Great Russian-dominated national state. This necessitated the abrogation of cultural, linguistic and religious autonomy, and an aggressive effort to promote Russian nationalism, even though the state itself was often uncomfortable with even friendly nationalism. Once again, the state's relationship with the local elites largely determined how extensive this Russification was, but firm policies were pursued even in

more cooperative borderland territories. The eventual fate of the Tsarist Empire in 1917 in part helps to capture the long-term failure of these policies.

Within the different borderland regions, the consequences of these phases of state-building varied dramatically. The most salient factor appears to have been the strength and cohesion of the local elites, and the nature of their relationship with the imperial state. In the Baltics and Finland the local elites became heavily integrated in Tsarist power structures, with the Baltic Germans being represented well in the civilian bureaucracy and the Finnish elites being represented well in the military. This degree of collaboration, combined with the social stability of these regions and the reliance of the elites on the Tsarist state in protecting their entrenched privileges, mitigated the extent of centralization and the vigor of Russification. In contrast, the Ukrainian *starshyna* did not succeed in protecting Ukrainian autonomy, as the elite classes proved to be much weaker than other borderland elites and far too easily absorbed into the Russian gentry. Tsarist offers of privilege within the ranks of the traditional Russian *dvorianstvo* proved too great a temptation to Cossack elites, leaving the institutions of the Hetmanate vulnerable to imperial incursions. The Polish-Lithuanian case offers the most tragic example of the importance of the relationship between the state and local elites. Although the Polish-Lithuanian *szlachta* were the most numerous and powerful of the borderland gentry classes, they were also the one whose interests clashed the most with Tsarist governance. The long history of gentry power and freedom during the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth made the prospect of subjection to Tsarist administration less than palatable and produced a seething conflict that erupted twice during the course of the 19th century. As such, Tsarist efforts to centralize administration and Russify Polish and

Lithuanian subjects were harsher than in the other borderlands, even if they proved incapable of truly assimilating their targets.

It is my contention that the importance of local elites to the process of state-building in the Tsarist Empire offers the most compelling explanation for the variation in Tsarist policies. The literature in the social sciences that is concerned with the construction of the modern state has long recognized the awkward political transition that this signaled for imperial polities, but does not in my opinion adequately explain the unevenness and inconsistency of the process. The state-building literature is concerned with the question of the role of internal elite groups and the bargaining process the state must go through to gain the compliance of those groups, but this is largely articulated in the language of economic side-payments. These types of side-payments were certainly relevant to the labor-repressive system of agriculture that the Tsarist state propagated, but they are nevertheless overshadowed by the political and cultural 'side-payments' made by the state to ensure imperial loyalty. The historiographical literature on the Tsarist Empire does a better job of acknowledging the role of local elites within the empire, and the traditional tendency of the Tsarist state to co-opt those elites, but it generally does not situate these elite-state relationships within a specific theoretical framework. If we acknowledge that the Tsarist Empire was undergoing an (eventually unsuccessful) attempt to transform itself into a coherent national state, we would expect Tsarist policy to oscillate over time and in intensity across the different regions, but we would not necessarily expect diametrically opposed policies within the same time period. However, the presence of the repression of the second Polish insurrection alongside a deepening of autonomy in Finland (as well as multiple other similar moments in Tsarist policy) forces

us to confront the presence of intervening variables during the process of transformation. The strength and orientation of local elites emerges as the most important intervening variable, translating the generalized pressures of state-building in the European context to the local conditions of the individual regions of the Western Borderlands.

As the preceding chapters make clear, the character of elite strength and orientation can be understood as a constellation of factors, of which numerical strength is not the most important. In the case of the Western Borderlands, the presence of stable political and economic institutions (as with the Baltic German Ritterschaften or the political institutions of the Polish *szlachta*) was important, but it was also mitigated by the presence or absence of elite cohesion (the factions among the *szlachta* thereby made them 'weaker' than the Baltic Germans when it came to dealing with the Tsarist state). Bracketing these characteristics of elite strength was the orientation of those elites towards the Tsarist state, which assumed an overriding importance in influencing the course of imperial policy. Cohesive and cooperative elites were better able to carve out (and extend) zones of autonomy, since they offered the Tsarist state the attractive payment of loyalty and regional stability (assuming that the elites held significant control over the regional population, which was not necessarily true in the Ukrainian Hetmanate). These variables of elite strength and orientation were instrumental in setting the terms of the relationship between the state and the specific regional elites, and these foundational arrangements exerted considerable downstream influence on Tsarist policy. In this way, the course of Tsarist policy in the Western Borderlands demonstrates the salience of path dependence as described by historical institutionalism, with original arrangements only

being significantly revised during times of severe political or economic stress.[605] These periods of stress were not uncommon during the time period considered (the Great Northern War, the Polish Insurrections, the Crimean War), but they were also not sufficient to completely abrogate traditional borderland policy outside of Poland-Lithuania, which was the epicenter of much of the conflict and repression. The lasting ability of the local elites to resist Tsarist incursions, even up until their power bases began to be eroded by the national awakenings of the late 19th century, points to the importance of these elites in influencing Tsarist policy.

Finally, the role of leadership choice in the imperial core should not be overlooked, as the actions of Tsarist officials and government ideology placed important constraints on the position of the borderlands. Here the role of the Tsar has the most salience, as the autocratic system of the empire featured oscillations in policy from one reign to the next, with obvious implications for local rule in the latter half of the 19th century. The gradual adoption of ethnic Russian nationalism (and the attendant policy of Russification) represented the most important departure from past policies with respect to the borderlands, and this shift occurred regardless of the strength and disposition of the borderland elites (though these factors naturally provided a source of resistance to Russification policies). Furthermore, the actions of individual Tsarist officials are also relevant, especially in the case of key officials like the Governors-General, who in many situations opted to buttress regional autonomy rather than central rule. The logic behind this decision reflected how the interests of the center could easily diverge from the

[605] See Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004). *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Kathleen Thelen, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics.," *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (June 1999): 369.

interests of its agents, a phenomenon common across much of imperial history (and not just Tsarist imperial history). Altogether, the factors of local elite strength and orientation along with the decision-making of Tsarist officials represent the theoretical contribution of this study to theories of direct and indirect rule. As argued by Gerring, Ziblatt, et al. degree of political institutionalization is a crucial contextual variable in explaining differential outcomes in direct and indirect rule, but it is my contention that this framework can be profitably modified to include the above intervening variables in the Tsarist and other cases.

Where do we go from here?

The logical question to ask at this point is: to what extent can the experiences of the late Tsarist Empire be generalized to other cases? Such generalization must naturally be limited, as the historical boundedness and contingency present in the Tsarist case obviously limits its application to other cases. The experiences of the late Tsarist Empire occurred at a nexus of major state-building and military competition in Europe, a context not easily replicated. Moreover, its position as a multiethnic empire in transition dramatically limits the potential case universe of direct comparisons. However, this understanding need not sap the present research of its potential explanatory power. As Charles Tilly noted regarding large historical cases and processes of political change, the specifics of a case may be restricted to a particular time and place, but we can nevertheless use such cases to cast new light across a range of other cases. Although the political systems of territorially-extensive empires proved to be incapable of surviving into the contemporary period, some of the basic conundrums they faced remain relevant

to territorially-extensive nation-states or nation-states with uneven dispersions of population. Although technologies of governance and bureaucratic structures are more sophisticated today, this sophistication is not universal and even where it is present it still relies to a large degree on the compliance of local populations. As such, the question of cultivating local proxies or clients is still essential to the problem of statecraft, and this need for local clients usually requires the devolution of some government authority to those clients. The degree to which the center has to abandon some of its power to the periphery can be influenced by a few variables. One variable is the capability of the center to exert direct control over the periphery, which can be a function of the presence of adequate infrastructure or transportation. Another variable is the size and relative strength of the periphery, especially insofar as it possesses military or economic resources that give it leverage over the center. These considerations have not been eliminated even in the most developed states, but they are especially salient in states still engaging in state-building processes. In many ways, the conflict represents a game between two (or more) players who are interested in maximizing their own power while protecting their existing prerogatives.

Historical Comparisons

Drawing historical comparisons with the Tsarist case is relatively attractive, as there are contemporaneous examples of territorially-extensive, heterogeneous empires. The Habsburg Empire and the Ottoman Empire provide a ready comparison with the Tsarist Empire. Both were large, multiethnic polities experiencing the same pressures as the Tsarist state, with escalating military competition and state-building in European rivals.

The frequency of conflict between these three continental empires in fact highlights the extent to which they spurred each other's political development, with the Tsarist and Ottoman empires in particular fighting each other regularly over their long period of political contact. The Habsburg and Ottoman Empires also demonstrate different potential solutions to the treatment of internal elites, with the Habsburg Empire providing greater political autonomy while the Ottoman Empire provided some religious and civil autonomy, but not political autonomy. The Habsburg and Ottoman Empire likewise shared the fate of the Tsarist Empire, dissolving as a result of the tumult of WWI and giving way to independent nation-states in their place. A comparison of the effect of state-building on the political systems of these three empires would provide the foundation for a longer study than that which is presented here.

The Habsburg Empire shares the greatest similarity with the Tsarist Empire. In addition to containing a wide array of ethnic and religious groups over an extensive territory (albeit nowhere as extensive as Tsarist Russia), the Habsburg Empire was ruled by a nominally-autocratic multiethnic elite which in practice conceded a substantial portion of governance to local elites. Aside from the more dominant Austrian and Hungarian nationalities, the empire also possessed substantial numbers of Poles and Ukrainians which would permit a direct comparison with Tsarist governance of these groups. The Polish partitions of the late 18th century ceded these areas to the Habsburg Empire, and the degree to which the state permitted these areas to manage themselves contrasts with the more stringent measures taken by the Tsarist state against the Ukrainian Hetmanate or Congress Poland. In addition, the Habsburgs dealt with the same issues of state-building as the Tsarist state, bordering a growing Prussian/German power

while also being involved in general European power politics. The pressures of regional military competition spurred a similar cycle of modernizing reforms and authoritarian retrenchment in the Habsburg Empire, with activist emperors being superseded by more reactionary or inactive rulers. Much in the same way that the Tsarist state went through bursts of modernization followed by periods of abeyance (Peter I and his successors, Catherine II and Paul, Alexander I and Nicholas I, etc), the Habsburgs offered an inconsistent response to the demands of state-building in modern Europe.

The Ottoman Empire possessed more extensive territories than the Habsburgs, spread over Europe, Asia, and Africa. Deeply involved in European affairs and a participant in many wars against the Tsarist Empire, the Ottoman Porte faced many of the same pressures as the Tsarist state and attempted many of the same solutions. The impetus for serious thinking about reform in the empire actually derived in part from a series of defeats in wars against Russia, with the Porte concluding that it had fallen behind its rival due to the reforms implemented by Peter I. Reforms commenced in the military domain in the late 18th and early 19th century, but quickly spread to political institutions, especially in the Tanzimat period of 1839-1876. These reforms were intended to modernize the military, introduce new banking and economic practices, and develop the foundation of secular law. Successes were significant but were often countered by efforts from reactionary forces, including traditional religious elites and janissary military forces who opposed military modernization. In addition to these convulsions of reform, the Porte also faced an empire of enormous heterogeneity, which was only heightened by the national awakenings experienced in parts of the Balkans especially. The Porte's solution was a mixture of local autonomy with the millet system,

which insulated non-Muslim religious groups from religious law. Although non-Muslims were treated as second-class citizens their position was not unlike tolerated non-Orthodox groups in the Tsarist Empire. Like the Tsarist and Habsburg governments, the Porte was ultimately unsuccessful in its efforts to modernize state-building, but the Ottoman Empire unraveled more rapidly due to the state's increasing reliance on foreign loans to buttress its economic position.

The final set of historical comparisons I will consider here are the European maritime empires. Although the maritime empires are usually treated separately from the extensive and contiguous empires of Eastern Europe and Eurasia, the literature on direct and indirect rule examines them at length and that theoretical commonality should allow for more ambitious comparisons with Tsarist Russia. Gerring, Ziblatt, et al. largely base their theoretical model off the experiences of the British Empire, and the texts they use in support of their theory extend from British North America through sub-Saharan Africa to British India. However, as I made clear in the introduction, the experiences of the British Empire can also be understood in terms of relations with local elites and the ways in which those local elites influence the mode of rule adopted. As such, the British (and French, and Spanish, and Portuguese, etc.) Empire provides a direct test of my theoretical addition to Gerring, Ziblatt, et al.'s model, and I am confident that the test vindicates the addition. As Naseemullah and Staniland note with respect to establishing the varieties of indirect rule, the question of direct and indirect rule is in many respects a false dichotomy.[606] By integrating explanatory variables such as political institutionalization, elite strength and coherence, elite orientation, and central leadership choice, we can

[606] Adnan Naseemullah and Paul Staniland, "Varieties of Indirect Rule: Explaining Governance Beyond Weberian Sovereignty," Unpublished Manuscript (University of Chicago, 2013).

bypass this stale dichotomy and establish a richer continuum for explaining the variations in rule across a broader array of cases.

Contemporary Comparisons

The most apt historical comparisons with the Tsarist Empire are typically territorially-extensive empires undergoing the stresses of transitioning to a modern age defined by the nation-state. In the contemporary period these comparisons are largely absent, due to the dissolution of these territorial empires in the first couple decades of the 20th century. The exception would be the Soviet Union, which recreated the territorial boundaries of Tsarist Russia and stitched itself together with violent repression, rapid industrialization, and rigid ideology. The USSR attempted to solve the problem of centralization versus decentralization through rigorous, top-down bureaucratic management. When this failed, the state partly compromised by devolving some responsibilities back to local regions, in the form of the local branch of the Communist Party, so long as the interests of the central state were observed. The USSR likewise attempted to solve the problem of heterogeneity first by inculcating the concept of the Soviet Man (or Woman) and then by punishing ethnic groups who proved to be insufficiently amenable to these designs (the forced deportation of groups in the Caucasus is one of many examples). Great Russians, by and large, retained ethnic dominance within the Soviet state, which only served to fuel what would become a new series of national uprisings in the waning days of the Soviet state.

Post-Soviet Russia is the most compelling contemporary example, as it retains the basic conflict between centralization and decentralization and a heterogeneous population

that the state has a difficult time governing. Although the Russian Federation no longer controls the Baltic states, Poland, Ukraine or other borderland regions, the remaining territory encompasses a significant degree of ethnic and religious diversity. The most problematic region for Post-Soviet Russia has been the Caucasus, with destructive conflicts in Chechnya that have spread to some degree to neighboring regions like Dagestan. Moreover, there is a simmering conflict with Georgia and its breakaway regions of Abkhazia and Ossetia that the Russian state has gotten involved in. By and large, the most common issue of governance related to heterogeneity concerns the substantial Muslim population, which the Russian government has handled with a mixture of ineptitude and discrimination. Orthodox Christianity remains the official religion and enjoys favored status, and while Islam is recognized by the state it has clearly been consigned to second-class status. The emergence of terrorism directed at Russia has only heightened the awkwardness of state policy, as a substantial part of the core Russian population supports discriminatory measures against the Caucasus. The use of servile proxies for Russian state interests has done little to address the inherent tension.

The challenge of heterogeneity is also sharpened by the basic conflict between centralization and decentralization in the post-Soviet period. After decades of stifling Soviet rule, Boris Yeltsin famously offered subnational units in the Federation as much sovereignty as they could swallow. With the complicated subdivision of Russia into Oblasts, Republics, Krais, and Okrugs, this produced a considerable variation in the degree of local self-government, with several ethnic Republics seeking formal autonomy. This experiment with radical decentralization began ending as a result of the destructive Chechen wars and the ascension of Vladimir Putin as Yeltsin's successor. Putin's

objective was to reassert the 'power vertical' of the state and eliminate much of the decentralization implemented under the Yeltsin government. Towards this end he instituted presidential representatives for super-regions of the Federation (essentially latter-day governors-general) answerable only to Moscow and took measures to curtail the power of local governors and assemblies. After the Beslan school siege ended in the deaths of hundreds of students and adults, he took the next step of abolishing gubernatorial elections and made governorships into appointed offices. This resumption of control by the federal center has been aided by the construction of Putin's United Russia party, which has effectively spread its tendrils throughout the country. However, there remains a considerable degree of decentralization in practice due to the inability of the central state to consistently project power throughout its territory. It remains an open question whether the current status quo is sustainable or whether there will be another oscillation if Putin and United Russia prove incapable of holding onto power. The Post-Soviet period therefore offers an interesting variation in state-elite relations, with Yeltsin pursuing greater accommodations and Putin pursuing greater centralization. Comparing these two policy approaches vis-a-vis local elites could provide an interesting perspective on the Post-Soviet Russian case.

Conclusion

The preceding examples are simply illustrative sketches regarding ways in which this research may be extended to other cases. The historical comparison with other heterogeneous empires is the most pertinent comparison, but that does not prevent creative contemporary applications. In my own view, a comparison of the governance

problems faced by the Tsarist empire with the similar governance problems faced by the Russian Federation is the most enticing option and could allow some new ways to conceptualize contemporary Russian politics. As I hope my research has made clear, my account of the political transformations in the Tsarist Empire and its borderlands is mainly a story about the transformations wrought by the construction of the modern state. As Michael Mann observed, in empires constructed before the modern age the direct control of the state was contingent on calculations of physical distance and the transportation necessary to bring troops from the center. These limitations made the cultivation of local proxies a desirable political strategy (insofar as it substantially reduced the costs of governance). With the advent of technologies that improved transportation of large numbers of troops, as well as improving the distribution of resources necessary to sustain those troops, this limitation was in part mitigated. In the more coherent national states of Europe these advances allowed for substantial centralization of government power without compromising the breadth and depth of that power. However, in the more extensive imperial states, these limitations remained. Railways and other modern technologies may have reduced costs, but they could not eliminate the essence of bargaining between the center and the periphery. Our contemporary conceit that the information age and globalization have made geographic distance trivial has not eliminated the persistence of these limitations in extensive states. They are a challenge not only for weak states (such as in sub-Saharan Africa), but also for moderately strong ones (such as the Russian Federation). The relationship between states and their internal elites can serve to capture some of the specific dynamics

undergirding the choice between direct and indirect rule, especially in territorially-extensive polities.

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