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Bureaucracy and Civil Society during the Era of the Great Reforms

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Understanding Siberia as a Colony:
Bureaucracy and Civil Society during the Era of the Great Reforms

Diego Repenning López

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements for award of the degree of PhD in Russian and Czech in the Faculty of Arts.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the relationship between Siberia and the Russian state during the second half of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. Amongst Russia's different regions, Siberia has enjoyed an ambiguous standing which produces a dichotomic – and even paradoxical – portrayal as both a Russian and a foreign territory. Throughout this thesis, I argue that this ambiguousness can be overcome by acknowledging the colonial nature of Siberia's position within the empire. By applying a colonial outlook to the study of Siberia, it is possible to understand the contradictory character of this region's attachment to the Russian state and to explain the origins of the regionalist movements that erupted after the fall of the imperial and Soviet polities. Consequently, this thesis delves into the study of the bureaucratic structures put in place after the Great Reforms in Russia and Siberia, exploring the mechanisms undergirding Siberia's colonial nature. In doing so, this thesis analyses the role played by the people who occupied middle and lower positions within imperial administration and the institutions that emerged from the Great Reforms: the *intelligentsiia*, *raznochintsy*, *popovichi* and professionals employed within the *zemstva*. Examining their activities, additionally, helps to elucidate how these individuals affected the development of Russia's civil society. The engagement with these issues allows me to further explore the excluding and including measures that characterise imperial settings and that are recognisable in Siberians' relationship to the Russian state.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: DATE:.....

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Note on Transliteration

Throughout this thesis I have transliterated Russian words from the Cyrillic alphabet using the Library of Congress system, with the exception of the names of known historical figures – such as tsars and the main 19th and early 20th century social actors – which are rendered in the familiar anglicised form (i.e. Alexander II rather than Aleksandr II, or Nicholas I instead of Nikolaï I). Most of the authors, people, institutions, concepts and places referenced throughout this work are presented in their Russian versions, as is the case with the familiar word *intelligentsia* which in this thesis is rendered as *intelligentsiia*. Exceptions can be found when quoting directly from a source which employs a different system.

Glossary

<i>chaldon</i>	Siberian-born individual descended from the first Russians settlers in the region
<i>chinovnik po krest'ianskim delam</i>	Peasant Affairs Officer, a figure existing in Siberia between 1883 and 1898 that preceded the existence of the Land Captain in European Russia
<i>formuliarnyi spisok</i>	Service record of an imperial official
<i>glasnost'</i>	Openness, transparency and publicity
<i>guberniia</i>	Province, the largest territorial unit in the Russian empire
<i>gubernskoe pravlenie</i>	Provincial Board, the higher administrative institution of imperial governance in the provinces, comprised of the tsar-appointed governor and the heads of major departments
<i>gubernskie vedomosti</i>	Provincial gazettes
<i>inorodtsy</i>	People of non-Slavic origin who enjoyed special rights within the legal framework of the Russian empire
<i>intelligent</i>	Member of the Russian <i>intelligentsiia</i> . See below.
<i>intelligentsiia</i>	Russian intellectual with a sense of social and political commitment
<i>kraevedenie</i>	Historiography of Russia's provincial history developed by local Russian researchers
<i>krest'ianskii nachal'nik</i>	Peasant Captain, a figure that mirrored the European Russian Land Captain and was the continuation of the Peasant Affairs Officer in Siberia
<i>oblast'</i>	Region, the second largest territorial unit of the Russian empire
<i>oblastiniki</i>	Regionalists, people who advocate for regional autonomy
<i>obshchestvennost'</i>	Civil society
<i>pisaria</i>	Scribes who were the only representatives of state bureaucracy in <i>volost'</i> courts
<i>popovichi</i>	Son of priests in Russia
<i>priezzhi</i>	Newcomer
<i>proizvol</i>	Arbitrariness
<i>raznochinets</i>	In 19 th Russia, intellectual of non-noble descent
<i>samobytnost'</i>	Uniqueness
<i>samosud</i>	Peasant practice of performing justice without resorting to official channels
<i>sibiriaki</i>	Siberian regionalists
<i>starozhil</i>	Old timer or Siberian-born individual of Russian descent. By the mid-19 th century, it also referred to people who had lived in Siberia for more than 25 years
<i>treby</i>	Parishioners' voluntary contribution for the maintenance of parish priests
<i>verst</i>	Unit of distance equal to 1.06 kilometres
<i>volost'</i>	Township, the smallest territorial unit in Russian administration

<i>voevody</i>	Civil and military authorities that governed colonial Russian borderlands before the installation of governors
<i>zemliachestvo</i>	A fraternal group of people united by their common fatherland
<i>zemskii nachal'nik</i>	Land captain, a figure created during Alexander III' reign, regarded as a reactionary measure
<i>zemstvo – zemstva</i> (pl.)	Organs of self-government at provincial and district level

Abbreviations

GATO	State Regional Archive of Tomsk
IRGO	Imperial Russian Geographical Society
MVD	Ministry of Internal Affairs
RGIA	Russian State Historical Archive
SV	<i>Sibirskii vestnik</i>
TGV	<i>Tomskie gubernskie vedomosti</i>
VO	<i>Vostochnoe obozrenie</i>

Chapter 1: Siberia's Colonial Condition

The start of the second half of the 19th century was a period of extensive changes and readjustments for the Russian empire. The end of Nicholas I's conservative reign, the accession of the more liberally-disposed Alexander II, the Crimean War disaster and the profound revisions to the empire's structure that it provoked – embodied in the Great Reforms project – were all events that showed the dynamic atmosphere felt throughout Russia during the 1850s and 1860s. As part of this changing context, and partly motivated by the opportunities that opened up in the European capitals of the empire, a group of young Siberian intellectuals started to question their region's position within the Russian polity. Like this thesis, they were animated by the desire to understand the nature of Siberia's relationship with the imperial centre, and to examine the conditions underpinning Siberia's attachment to the Russian state. Their questioning stemmed from the tensions arising from their self-perception as both Siberians and Russians, two dimensions of their identity that, in their view, were valued differently. For this reason, they felt it was necessary to advocate for the recognition of Siberia's colonial status within the empire and the granting of autonomy for their region.

It all erupted in May 1865, when a cadet of the Omsk military academy was found in possession of letters that alarmed bureaucratic authorities in both Siberia and the European capitals of the Russian empire. Among the letters found, there was an especially unsettling proclamation entitled 'To Siberian Patriots'. In it, the author – a Siberian merchant called S. S. Popov, who wrote the letter in 1863 – denounced the atrocities committed in Siberia by the Russian empire throughout the years of its imperial suzerainty over the region. In their view, Siberia's use as a penal colony of the Russian empire from its conquest onwards showed that 'Siberia, more than any other section of the empire, has felt the severity of monarchical oppression, the absolute and forceful subjugation and the insults inflicted on its people by autocratic rulers'.¹ In Popov's opinion, the brutality of imperial control was explained by the fact that:

Governors and *voevody*², who have been coming to Siberia for almost three centuries, have arbitrarily managed Siberia, extorting and robbing, tormenting and torturing, hanging and killing our unfortunate

¹ Nikolaï Valentinovich Serebrennikov, *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii*, Sibirskii arkhiv (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 2002), p. 92.

² Military authorities that governed during the first century of Russia's annexation of Siberia.

people. The whole history of Siberia is marked by terrible violence, by the atrocities of tsarist officials and the numerous political and economic constraints imposed.³

This proclamation, and the dim view it represented of Russia's relationship with Siberia, originated in St. Petersburg amongst a group of young Siberian students who started expressing their concerns regarding Siberia's place in the Russian empire. By developing a regionalist outlook – intellectually rooted in the federalist ideals espoused by the Siberian-born historian A. P. Shchapov and the Ukrainian autonomist N. I. Kostomarov – they demanded the end of the colonial treatment that, in their view, Siberia had endured throughout its historical relationship with the Russian state.⁴

Their contention that Siberia was a colony of the Russian empire was manifested, in the opinion of these young regionalists (*oblastniki*⁵), in the fact that the state was 'apparently uninterested in harnessing the huge natural resources of Siberia or in the region's cultural development', as Skubnevskii and Goncharov have argued.⁶ This lack of concern on the part of the Russian metropolis for Siberia generated demands for further autonomy among the Siberian *oblastniki*. By doing so, they were denouncing the fact that Siberia had been left to the mercy of what James Gibson described as "Siberian satraps", that is, an officialdom that, being geographically removed from metropolitan oversight, enabled an 'official corruption [that] became proverbial in Siberia'.⁷ For this reason, they believed that to overcome the historical exploitation by the metropolitan power they needed to achieve greater control over the administration of their homeland. Their political demands stemmed from the belief that, as a region distinct from European Russia, Siberia was entitled to 'develop autonomously according to its own interests'⁸ as Kovalaschina has argued. In the opinion of these young regionalists, Siberia was a place

³ Serebrennikov, *Delo*, p. 92.

⁴ See Elena Kovalaschina, 'The Historical and Cultural Ideals of the Siberian Oblastnichestvo', *Sibirica*, 6.2 (2007), 87–119 (p. 88). See also Gyula Szvák, 'The Golden Age of Russian Historical Writing: The Nineteenth Century', in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing: 1800–1945*, ed. by Stuart Macintyre, Juan Manguerra, and Attila Pók, *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, IV (Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 303–25.

⁵ As Andrew Gentes has argued, this word means 'regionalist'. However, it 'also carries connotations of "separatism" for proponents and opponents alike'. See Andrew A. Gentes, 'Peopling the Russian Periphery: Borderland Colonization in Eurasian History, and: Sibir' v sostave Rossiiskoi imperii [Siberia as Part of the Russian Empire] (Review)', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 10.4 (2009), 963–73 (p. 965).

⁶ V. A. Skubnevskii and Iu. M. Goncharov, 'Siberian Merchants in the Latter Half of the Nineteenth Century', *Sibirica*, 2.1 (2002), 21–42 (p. 23).

⁷ James R. Gibson, 'The Significance of Siberia to Tsarist Russia', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 14.3 (1972), 442–53 (p. 445).

⁸ Kovalaschina, 'The Historical and Cultural Ideals of the Siberian Oblastnichestvo', p. 88.

defined by its particular conditions which included a different social structure, without the hereditary nobility and bonded serf labour that characterised European Russia. Siberia, instead, was populated mostly by free, land-owning peasants, which differentiated Siberians from their European Russian brethren, creating a particular social and cultural environment.

Nevertheless, these views were considered seditious by the imperial government and those who were connected to the proclamation found in Omsk in 1865 were arrested, stripped of their civil status and privileges, and were ultimately exiled from Siberia to the northern penal colonies of the Baltic. Over seventy arrests were carried out in Siberia and the European section of the empire which, in David Rainbow's words, 'heightened the fear of Siberian separatism in the minds of imperial officials for years to come'.⁹ The process of greater openness that had been inaugurated in the 1860s by the promulgation of the Great Reforms, including a relaxation of censorship and the creation of organs of self-government, started to recede as the autocracy began to swerve towards a more rigid political stance. The Polish insurrection of 1863 – 1864, attempts on the lives of state officials and the tsar, and the pressure from noble conservatives in court brought the autocracy to question the measures applied after the Crimean War. Immediately following this period of greater openness, the autocracy began a process of reasserting its authority against the expansion of political participation by greater sections of society, especially the *intelligentsia*. In this context, and despite the harsh government crackdown on regionalists in the 1860s, Siberian regionalists' ideals continued to develop in the region throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

The regicide of Alexander II and the accession of Alexander III in 1881 marked the consolidation of the conservative turn in imperial policy from the centre and the emergence of a series of reactionary measures against the more liberal policies of the 1860s. At the same time, in 1882, one of the most prominent intellectuals among Siberia's regionalists – referred to as *sibiriaki* – Nikolaï M. Iadrintsev, published a polemical study of Russia's relationship with Siberia entitled *Siberia as a Colony*. In it, he gave historical

⁹ David Rainbow, *Siberian Patriots: Participatory Autocracy and the Cohesion of the Russian Imperial State, 1858–1920* (New York: New York University, 2013), p. 38. Metropolitan anxieties regarding the danger of Siberian separatism is also a topic that Mark Bassin develops when discussing the annexation of the Amur region a decade earlier. Imperial expansion in the East was seen cautiously by metropolitan authorities as, in M. A. Bakunin's words, 'there is no doubt that with time the Amur will draw Siberia away from Russia and give it independence and autonomy. This is much feared in St. Petersburg, where they were even worried that Mura'ev [himself] might proclaim Siberia's independence'. See Mark Bassin, *Imperial Visions: Nationalist Imagination and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840–1865* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 169.

and cultural grounds for talking about Siberia's distinct culture. He put forward the idea that Siberians and Russians, although closely related, were in possession of different cultural traits and customs that gave Siberians the right to enjoy a local self-administration. Up to that point, Iadrintsev explained, the metropolis had not considered the region's interests and had placed it under the control of a metropolitan bureaucratic machinery that considered the region as a haven for the furthering of their own bureaucratic careers. This situation was aggravated by the introduction of self-government institutions – *zemstva* – and other reforms that were being put in place in European Russia within the context of the Great Reforms, but not implemented in Siberia, despite locals' calls for their application. According to Iadrintsev, this had had the effect of keeping the region at a low level of cultural development as well as hindering the expansion of a civic consciousness among Siberia's population. In his opinion:

The life of the colonies is beating ever stronger; [...] the emerging society is teeming with vigour as this young organism, in which civil life is taking shape, demands more freedom. The development of a child's body requires more activity to grow than the body of an adult. In the same way, the progress and accumulation of wealth in the colonies depends on the intensification of this civil activity.¹⁰

The regionalist movement in Siberia kept stirring as the 19th century came to an end, despite the massive peasant resettlement programmes that moved around two million Russian Europeans to Siberia to alleviate the agrarian crisis in the empire's centre, changing the demographic and political landscape of Siberia.¹¹ For example, during the 1905 revolution that erupted after the Russo-Japanese war, Nicholas II reluctantly agreed to a series of concessions that limited autocratic power, including the creation of a legislative body, the Russian Duma, and the extension of self-government institutions to regions that despite being considered potentially rebellious, such as the Polish kingdom, saw the establishment of *zemstva*.¹² Siberia, however, was not granted such concessions. In this context, Siberian regionalists formed a Siberian Regional Union which 'lobbied for the establishment of *zemstvos* in Siberia, for the region to be granted autonomy and

¹⁰ Nikolaï Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia* (St. Petersburg: Tip. M.M. Stasiulevicha, 1882), p. 441.

¹¹ See Lewis Siegelbaum, 'Paradise or Just a Little Bit Better? Siberian Settlement "Fever" in Late Imperial Russia', *The Russian Review*, 76.1 (2017), 22–37. See also David Moon, *The Plough That Broke the Steppes: Agriculture and Environment on Russia's Grasslands, 1700–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹² See Figure 1: *Zemstva's Territorial Expansion through Time*

for the convening of a Siberian Regional Assembly (*Oblastnaia дума*)'.¹³ In May 1917, just after the February Revolution, regionalists gathered in the Siberian city of Tomsk and raised the white and green flag of Siberian autonomy. The assembly stated that:

Siberia, owing to her geographic position, her vastness and her special ethnographic and other local conditions, is to receive the right of broad self-government, but not to break her political connection with the Russian Republic. Siberia is to have her own All-Siberian Regional Duma, which will make laws relating to the internal affairs of Siberia.¹⁴

This regional advocacy, which after the Russian Civil War was subdued and marginalised,¹⁵ again erupted in force after the fall of the USSR in the 1990s. During the process of disintegration of the former Soviet polity, which entailed a redefinition of Russian state boundaries, Siberians took part in what was referred to as the 'parade of sovereignties' that fought for the recognition of the region's autonomic aspirations and the granting of wider self-government powers, a struggle that has been erupting periodically in Siberia during the past decades.¹⁶ The ongoing protests in Khabarovsk during 2020 caused by Moscow's dismissal of its regional governor, Sergei I. Furgal, attest to these aspirations.

The long trajectory of Siberia's regionalist movement and its questioning of Siberia as an integral part of the Russian state is what motivates this thesis and draws me to look at Siberia's colonial condition. Animated by the same questions posed by the young Siberian regionalists, this thesis analyses the nature of Siberia's relationship with the Russian state during the second half of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. I concentrate on this movement's first stages in order to understand its inception, the conditions of its advent and the origin of the images used to explain Siberia's relationship with the Russian state to this day. By focusing on the conditions that enabled Siberians to perceive their relationship with the Russian empire as a colonial one – instead of focusing on the activities of the regionalist movement itself, which has been done elsewhere – I

¹³ Igor V. Naumov, *The History of Siberia*, ed. by David Collins (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 147.

¹⁴ I. I. Serebrennikov, 'The Siberian Autonomous Movement and Its Future', *Pacific Historical Review*, 3.4 (1934), 400–415 (p. 406).

¹⁵ See John Givens, 'Siberia as Volia: Vasilii Shukshin's Search for Freedom', in *Between Heaven and Hell: The Myth of Siberia in Russian Culture*, ed. by Galya Diment and Yuri Slezkine (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1993), pp. 171–84.

¹⁶ See Manuel Castells and Emma Kiselyova, 'Russian Federalism and Siberian Regionalism, 1990–2000', *City, Russian federalism and Siberian regionalism*, 4.2 (2000), 175–98. See also Viacheslav V. Shevtsov, 'The Regional Identity of the Siberian Community: Major Formation Factors and Reconstruction Problems', *Europolis*, 7.1 (2013), 17.

aim to contribute to the understanding of the origins of the autonomous movements that raged through Siberia both at the end of the tsarist and Soviet eras.¹⁷ In this sense, my analysis examines the mechanisms that allowed for the existence and recreation of differences between the core of the empire – that is, European Russia – and the territories east of the Urals. At the same time, addressing the nature of this relationship will provide the means to understand and overcome the ambiguity that has riddled Siberia’s position within the different formations that the Russian state has assumed over time.

In order to do this, I centre my analysis on two main aspects of the empire’s relationship with Siberia during the second half of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, which have been neglected by the existing scholarship. First, I investigate the differences existing between the bureaucratic system put in place in the European provinces of the empire and its Siberian equivalent after the Great Reforms, looking at the intended and unintended socio-political consequences of this process. By analysing these effects, I argue that the regions where these reforms were applied also experienced the development of a more expanded political sphere that allowed the middle groups of society – professionals, *raznochinets*, *popovichi*, and *intelligentsiia* – to engage more actively in public affairs. I then proceed to analyse the limited implementation of those policies in Siberia, and the impact their absences had on regional governance, a process that ultimately generated an acute perception of the differences between Siberia and European provinces of the empire among Siberians. Second, I demonstrate how these reforms – or lack of them – affected the development of civil society (*obshchestvennost’*) both in European Russia and Siberia through the analysis of work developed in newspapers and journals. By delving into these materials, I argue that middle groups’ possibilities to participate in decision-making – that is, the composition of the institutional framework available for the governing of their regions and localities – became an important criterion for determining the colonial nature of a region’s relationship with the metropolis.

To introduce this thesis, I analyse the ambiguous condition Siberia enjoyed in the eyes – and practices – of Russia’s imperial government, that constantly swerved between treating Siberia as an extension of Russia itself – that is, not as a foreign colony, but as

¹⁷ For accounts that deal with the regional movement and its main leaders see Stephen Digby Watrous, *Russia’s ‘Land of the Future’: Regionalism and the Awakening of Siberia, 1819–1894* (Washington: University of Washington, 1970); Rainbow, *Siberian Patriots*; Norman Pereira, ‘The Idea of Siberian Regionalism in Late Imperial and Revolutionary Russia’, *Russian History*, 20.1/4 (1993), 163–178.

an internal province of the Russian empire – and as an Asiatic frontier and colony during the second half of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. This ambiguous image – one that thwarted Siberian regionalists’ goal of obtaining recognition for the region’s uniqueness and its claim for autonomy – has continued to affect comprehensions of Siberia in Russian, Soviet and foreign historiography.¹⁸ Moreover, this ambiguity remains to this day entrenched in our comprehension of the region, despite the continuity of Siberia’s regionalist movement.

Such an image can be shifted if, from the start, we analyse the region from a colonial perspective, understanding ambiguity – that is, policies of inclusion and exclusion of Siberia within the different forms of the Russian state – as one of the tools that empires develop for ruling outlying domains. In the context of structures that highlighted Siberia’s nature as both Russian and foreign, the creation of differences was central to the way in which the region was governed during the second half of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. The recognition of the centrality of these differences in Siberians’ experience, enables a comprehension of the region that moves away from the dichotomic image of Siberia held to this day.

Siberia and its Colonial Status

The regionalists’ goal of having Siberia recognised as a colony of the Russian empire was not straightforward, as the imperial court in St. Petersburg was reluctant to refer to it as such. There were many reasons that made it difficult to brand Siberian territories as colonies. First and foremost, the territorial continuity between metropolis and Siberia made the separation between them a problematic exercise that relied heavily on the invention of imagined geographical discourses to assert differences.¹⁹ This situation was supplemented by the fact that, as Alberto Masoero has argued, Russian state officials were both attracted to and cautious about referring to the empire’s territorial acquisitions as colonies. On the one hand, there was the appealing lure of naming these territories as colonial domains, as it had the enlightened overtones of a civilised culture exerting its superiority over inferior and barbaric cultures, very much in the fashion of

¹⁸ An example of this ambiguous image is represented by *Between Heaven and Hell: The Myth of Siberia in Russian Culture*, ed. by Galya Diment and Yuri Slezkine (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1993).

¹⁹ See Mark Bassin, ‘Inventing Siberia: Visions of the Russian East in the Early Nineteenth Century’, *The American Historical Review*, 96.3 (1991), 763–94.

their European neighbours.²⁰ On the other hand, however, this image clashed with the ‘autocratic principle [which] inhibited the adoption of a spatial hierarchy that might foreshadow, albeit implicitly, future political fragmentation and the devolution of sovereignty’.²¹ Instead, Russian officials preferred to consider territorial expansion as the growth of the Russian state, which acquired and incorporated lands into a single political body. As Masoero has argued, this view was manifested in the mid-1880s by the Interior Minister’s peremptory declaration that “‘We have no colonies’”.²² Instead, officials understood imperial expansion as the natural growth of the Russian state followed by assimilation of the bordering regions.

The view of an ever-growing state which gradually incorporated its new dominions has been explored in detail by Willard Sunderland, who argues that Russian officials were reluctant to use the language that western European empires employed in their colonial ventures, in order to avoid separatist movements.²³ For Sunderland, this can be partly explained by the fact that ‘the tsarist imperial polity never gave up defining itself more as a dynastic order than as a national Russian one – that is, right to the end, the empire remained stubbornly *rossiiskaia* (of the Russian state) rather than *russkaia* (defined by Russian nationality),’²⁴ a position that helped to underline the difficulties the empire endured in positioning itself within the context of the emerging model of nation-states.²⁵ This reluctance was ever more pronounced since Siberians and metropolitan officials were quite often making historical parallels between Siberia and the fate of the thirteen emancipated colonies of North America. Such a similarity was regarded with caution by metropolitan officials, as “‘America” represented not so much a specific country as the process by which that country had come into existence,’ as Bassin argues.²⁶

²⁰ See for example Marisa Karyl Franz, ‘A Visitor’s Guide to Shamans and Shamanism: The Kunstkamera’s Russian and Asian Ethnographic Collections in the Late Imperial Era’, *Sibirica*, 19.1 (2020), 41–56.

²¹ Alberto Masoero, ‘Territorial Colonization in Late Imperial Russia: Stages in the Development of a Concept’, *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 14.1 (2013), 59–91 (p. 68). See also Olga Maiorova, *From the Shadow of Empire: Defining the Russian Nation Through Cultural Mythology, 1855–1870* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010).

²² In Alberto Masoero, ‘Russia between Europe and Asia’, in *The Boundaries of Europe: From the Fall of the Ancient World to the Age of Decolonisation*, ed. by Pietro Rossi, Discourses on Intellectual Europe (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter Akademie Forschung, 2015), pp. 192–208 (p. 202).

²³ Willard Sunderland, ‘The Ministry of Asiatic Russia: The Colonial Office That Never Was but Might Have Been’, *Slavic Review*, 69.1 (2010), 120–150 (pp. 121–22).

²⁴ Sunderland, ‘The Ministry of Asiatic Russia’, p. 122. See also Willard Sunderland, ‘Empire without Imperialism? Ambiguities of Colonization in Tsarist Russia’, *Ab Imperio*, 2003.2 (2003), 101–14.

²⁵ See Seymour Becker, ‘Russia and the Concept of Empire’, *Ab Imperio*, 2000.3–4 (2000), 329–42; Theodore Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863–1914* (DeKalb: Cornell University Press, 2008); Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia, People and Empire: 1552–1917* (London: Fontana Press, 1998).

²⁶ Bassin, *Imperial Visions*, p. 170.

The ambiguity that Siberia enjoyed as a colonial territory can also be explained by its historical context. For government officials during the 1840s and the beginning of the 1850s, Siberia's meaning was changing. From what had been a paradigmatic dumping ground for exiles and a source for extracting natural resources – such as furs, pelts, gold and silver – until the first decades of the 1800s, Siberia started to take on a different meaning as new developments started to affect the region. In this respect, Steven Marks has argued that this change in Siberia's significance for metropolitan officials had to do with inter-imperial relationships that, moving away from the traditional Atlantic or Mediterranean scenarios, started to give more importance to the Pacific Ocean. In Marks' view, the activity being developed in the Pacific by the U.S., Japan, China, France and Britain, forced Russia to reconsider their strategic engagement with the region.²⁷

As part of these shifting geopolitical concerns, during the latter years of the first half of the 19th century, Petersburg officials started to attach more relevance to Siberian issues, a development that can partly be explained by the imperial drive behind the annexation of the Amur basin on the Chinese border, and the importance given to the region during the decade of the 1840s.²⁸ Similarly, the sale of Alaska in 1867 can be understood in terms of the geopolitical calculations that made metropolitan officials consider those territories as a possible liability – an imperial overstretch –, rather than an asset, in the strengthening of Russia's position in the Pacific *vis-à-vis* the growing inter-imperial competition being developed in the region, as Vinkovetsky has argued.²⁹

Within this context, different ways of understanding Siberia's role in the history of the Russian state and its peoples emerged. In this sense, the frontier history developed by Sergeĭ M. Solov'ev (1820–1879) was instrumental in providing a national and cultural framework for understanding Siberia's relationship with the Russian state. His influential work *History of Russia from the Earliest Times* espoused the view that Siberia was a

²⁷ See Steven G. Marks, *Road to Power: The Trans-Siberian Railroad and the Colonization of Asian Russia, 1850–1917* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1991), chap. 2. This argument is also developed by Janet Hartley, “‘A Land of Limitless Possibilities’: British Commerce and Trade in Siberia in the Early Twentieth Century”, *Sibirica*, 13.3 (2014), 1–21. See also Edyta M. Bojanowska, *A World of Empires: The Russian Voyage of the Frigate Pallada* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018). Bojanowska explores the commercial mission of Ivan A. Goncharov during the Crimean War, to open the Japanese market to Russian trade. Goncharov's mission arrived in Japan only 5 weeks after Commodore M. Perry.

²⁸ See Bassin, *Imperial Visions*; Sharyl Corrado, ‘A Land Divided: Sakhalin and the Amur Expedition of G.I. Nevel'skoi, 1848–1855’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, 45 (2014), 70–81.

²⁹ See Ilya Vinkovetsky, *Russian America: An Overseas Colony of a Continental Empire, 1804–1867* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). Vinkovetsky argues Russian interests coincided with the U.S., as their main concern was stopping the growth of British influence in the Pacific.

natural frontier of the Russian state that was destined to be absorbed.³⁰ As Mark Bassin has argued, Solov'ev 'believed that the primary task of the historian was to elucidate national origins and patterns of development,'³¹ and within that drive he understood Siberia not as a colony of the Russian empire, but as a 'backward' frontier that was bound to be organically incorporated to the more advanced Russian state and nationality. This perspective, as Jan Kusber has argued, allowed Yermak, the Cossack conqueror of Siberia, to become a Russian hero who embodied the process of expansion and colonisation that 'resulted in the narrative of imperial history being dominated by a Russian "national" perspective. Thus, Siberia became genuinely Russian soil'.³²

These scholars' search for an encompassing national narrative that could give sense to the territorial – as well as the historical – formation of the Russian state were partly responsible for Siberia's uncertain image. The latter was a similar perspective to the one developed by Nikolaï Danilevskii in his work *Russia and Europe* (1869) in which he sought to erase the Urals as the dividing line between Europe and Asia, as the imperial geographer Tishchev had done during the 18th century. According to Masoero, Danilevskii's assessment turned Russia into 'the centre of a terrestrial mass, a unitary "natural region" with respect to which western Europe was reduced to the status of a promontory of Asia'.³³ According to this view, Russia was a geographical unit whose expansion should not be considered under the light of a colonising process, but as part of an internal development of the Russian state, which was on its path towards reaching its natural borders.

This perspective continued to be influential during the 20th century, as both Vasilii O. Kliuchevskii and Matvei K. Liubavskii saw the expansion of the Russian state's frontiers as a central feature of Russian history.³⁴ The move to regard Siberia, not as a colony of the Russian empire, but rather as a natural frontier that was bound to be engulfed was further developed within the nationalist historiography that stemmed from the Slavophile doctrine, which was continued into the 20th century by Eurasianists' understanding of the Russian state's historical trajectory. For them, regarding Siberia as

³⁰ Written in 29 volumes and published in St. Petersburg between 1851 and 1879.

³¹ Mark Bassin, 'Turner, Solov'ev, and the "Frontier Hypothesis": The Nationalist Signification of Open Spaces', *The Journal of Modern History*, 65.3 (1993), 473–511 (p. 481).

³² Jan Kusber, 'Mastering the Imperial Space: The Case of Siberia Theoretical Approaches and Recent Directions of Research', *Ab Imperio*, 2008.4 (2008), 52–74 (p. 73).

³³ Masoero, 'Russia between Europe and Asia', p. 203. Perspectives that rejected the colonial nature of the Russian state's expansion into Asia also include the works of intellectuals Vladimir I. Lamanskiï, Sergeï N. Iuzhakov and Esper E. Ukhtomskii.

³⁴ Rieber, 'Changing Concepts and Constructions of Frontiers', pp. 41–42.

a colonial domain amounted to equating Russia's history with that of imperialistic Europe, something that was strongly resisted among representatives of Slavophile, Eurasian and later Soviet scholarship.³⁵ This characteristic was sustained during the Cold War through the USSR's tight control over foreign influences and the articulation of their position as an alternative path of development, that is, as the Second World.³⁶

The historiographic tendency to naturalise the link between Siberia and the European imperial core was also the result of research that occurred within the standard frames and chronologies of Russian history. In these perspectives, the tsarist and Soviet empires encompassed Siberia as a stable geographical reality in which the periphery was permanently linked to its metropolis. This scholarship hardly conceived the colonial nature of the process of annexation, a view that was facilitated by the strong influence that Jackson Turner's frontier theory had in Anglophones' study of Russia's expansion toward the east. Following Solov'ev and Kliuchevskii, Turner provided the framework to understand Russia's expansion as the natural movement towards the gathering of Russian lands, dismissing the idea of Siberia as a space subjected to colonisation.³⁷ Similarly,

³⁵ Maria Todorova, 'Does Russian Orientalism Have a Russian Soul? A Contribution to the Debate between Nathaniel Knight and Adeeb Khalid', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 1.4 (2000), 717–27; Dominic Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals from the Sixteenth Century to the Present* (London: Pimlico, 2003). The authors talk about the myth of Russia's uniqueness in historiography, a tendency that puts Russia outside any wider historical picture due to particular circumstances that prevent historians from including Russia in general debates about, for example, feudalism, serfdom and colonialism. See also Rozaliya Cherepanova, 'Discourse on a Russian "Sonderweg": European Models in Russian Disguise', *Studies in East European Thought*, 62. 3–4 (2010), 315–29.

³⁶ See Patty Gray, Nikolai Vakhtin, and Peter Schweitzer, 'Who Owns Siberian Ethnography? A Critical Assessment of a Re-Internationalized Field', *Sibirica*, 3.2 (2003), 194–216.

³⁷ There have been numerous studies that create parallels between the westward expansion of the US and Russia's annexation of the east. See Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Holt, 1935). This was the perspective used by George V. Lantzeff, *Siberia in the Seventeenth Century: A Study of Colonial Administration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1943); Vasilii O. Kliuchevskii, *A Course in Russian History: The Seventeenth Century* (Armonk, N.Y: Routledge, 1994); Joseph L. Wiczyński, 'Toward a Frontier Theory of Early Russian History', *The Russian Review*, 33.3 (1974), 284–95; Robert Joseph Kerner, 'The Russian Eastward Movement: Some Observations on Its Historical Significance', *Pacific Historical Review*, 17.2 (1948), 135–48; Donald W. Treadgold, 'Russian Expansion in the Light of Turner's Study of the American Frontier', *Agricultural History*, 26.4 (1952), 147–52. This is a view also developed in Claudia Weiss, *Wie Sibirien 'unser' wurde: Die Russische Geographische Gesellschaft und ihr Einfluss auf die Bilder und Vorstellungen von Sibirien im 19. Jahrhundert*. (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007). The same can be said of *The Siberian Saga: A History of Russia's Wild East*, ed. by Eva-Maria Stolberg (Peter Lang, 2005). These authors work from the similarities that Siberia shows with United States' western frontier. In this sense, the expansion responds to an early national awareness that broadly translates to a will of expansion. See also Leonid P. Levin and Maksim G. Potapov, *The Peoples of Siberia* (University of Chicago Press, 1964); James Forsyth, *A History of the Peoples of Siberia: Russia's North Asian Colony 1581–1990* (Cambridge University Press, 1994); Naumov, *The History of Siberia*; Bruce Lincoln, *The Conquest of a Continent: Siberia and the Russians* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007). These authors address Siberian history from both an ethnographic perspective and a view of Siberia as a land of resources, telling its history from the narrative of Russian exploitation of Siberia's natural richness. See also Stephen Sabol, 'Comparing American and Russian

Soviet scholarship, attuned to the ideological lines imposed by the party, understood the colonising process as the settlement of the Slavic peoples, who were ‘a “positive force” that had brought “economic development” and “cultural improvement” to the borderlands’.³⁸

The impossibility of studying the Russian empire from a colonial perspective in non-Soviet scholarship during most of the 20th century was complemented by classic imperial historiography that questioned the tsarist state’s classification as an empire. The overseas arrangement of colonial possessions and the capitalist development of an industrialised economy were considered basic underlying characteristics of the ‘modern’ European empires recognised by classic imperialism. These were conditions that tsarist Russia did not meet, despite the Alaskan experiment and the limited industrial development in the final decades of the 19th century. In fact, this historiography stressed that Russia itself had a relation of dependency to European capital and technology, being therefore partly colonised by its western neighbors.³⁹ This implied that Russia had to be studied as an object of imperialism, rather than a practitioner of it, a line of enquiry that fitted well with Lenin’s identification of European empires as the true enemies of the workers’ revolution. Those same objections kept the USSR outside research in ‘imperial’ history, as Marxism was held to be incompatible with the capitalist underpinnings of classic imperial settings, even more so considering that the USSR had an ideological identification with anti-imperialist causes throughout the Third World.⁴⁰

Colonial Siberia and Historiographic Tendencies after the 1990s

The 1990s opened a new period in the study of Russia and its colonial periphery. After the fall of the USSR, which signaled the formal end to ideological censorship and

Internal Colonization: The “Touch of Civilisation” on the Sioux and Kazakhs’, *The Western Historical Quarterly*, 43.1 (2012), 29–51; Kate Brown, ‘Gridded Lives: Why Kazakhstan and Montana Are Nearly the Same Place’, *The American Historical Review*, 106.1 (2001), 17. See also Andreas Kappeler and A. Kaplunovski, ‘Iuzhnyĭ i vostochnyĭ frontir Rossii v XVI–XVIII vekakh’, *Ab Imperio*, 2003.1 (2003), 47–64.

³⁸ *Peopling the Russian Periphery: Borderland Colonization in Eurasian History*, ed. by Nicholas B. Breyfogle, Abby M. Schrader, and Willard Sunderland (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 3.

³⁹ Dieter Geyer, ‘Modern Imperialism? The Tsarist and the Soviet Examples’, in *Imperialism and After. Continuities and Discontinuities*, ed. by Wolfgang Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986). See also Viatcheslav Morozov, *Russia’s Postcolonial Identity: A Subaltern Empire in a Eurocentric World* (New York: Springer, 2015).

⁴⁰ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

the loosening of access to archives for local and foreign researchers, new life was injected into the historiography of Russia both internally and abroad. In this new context, ideas coming from Said's *Orientalism* began to gain currency in studies about Russia as an empire, decentralising the ways in which Russian history was studied, and opening opportunities for a colonial understanding of Siberia and Asiatic Russia in general.⁴¹ However, the application of these ideas was not unproblematic. Many features of the Russian empire could not be accommodated to Orientalist premises, creating strong debates about the pertinence of applying such perspectives in the study of Russia. Following Nathaniel Knight's article on a colonial official named Grigor'ev in 19th century Russia,⁴² many historians have debated a postcolonial understanding of Russia, as portrayed in the 'Ex Tempore' debate in *Kritika*,⁴³ followed by Ewa Thompson's and Vera Tolz's involvement in the issue.⁴⁴ Furthermore, David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye and Tolz⁴⁵ elaborated more systematic critiques of Russian Orientalism, an effort deepened by Alexander Etkind and his conceptual proposition 'orientalism reversed' in which he questions the unilaterality of colonial encounters, instead stressing their reciprocal nature.⁴⁶ Authors that have dismissed Orientalism as an approach to Russia's colonial dominions have critiqued Said's binary geographical categories opposing west and east in a dichotomous relationship. In their views, this opposition, which could operate for western empires, had no currency when applied to Russia.

At the start of the 21st century, historiography about Russia, both in Russia and abroad, moved on from this early rejection and started engaging and solving incompatibilities with *Orientalism* by applying the theoretical tools developed within the

⁴¹ See Willard Sunderland, 'What Is Asia to Us?: Scholarship on the Tsarist "East" since the 1990s', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 12.4 (2011), 817–33; *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917*, ed. by Daniel R Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).

⁴² Nathaniel Knight, 'Grigor'ev in Orenburg, 1851–1862: Russian Orientalism in the Service of Empire?', *Slavic Review*, 59.1 (2000), 74–100.

⁴³ See Adeeb Khalid, 'Russian History and the Debate over Orientalism', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 1.4 (2000), 691–99. See also Nathaniel Knight, 'On Russian Orientalism: A Response to Adeeb Khalid', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 1.4 (2000), 701–15. See also Todorova, 'Does Russian Orientalism Have a Russian Soul?'

⁴⁴ See the letters between Ewa M. Thompson, '[No Title]', *Slavic Review*, 59.3 (2000), 729–30; Nathaniel Knight, '[No Title]', *Slavic Review*, 59.3 (2000), 730–31. See also Vera Tolz, 'Orientalism, Nationalism, and Ethnic Diversity in Late Imperial Russia', *The Historical Journal*, 48.1 (2005), 127–50.

⁴⁵ See David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism: Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), and Vera Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient: The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁴⁶ Alexander Etkind, 'Orientalism Reversed: Russian Literature in the Times of Empires', *Modern Intellectual History*, 4.03 (2007), 617–28.

imperial turn in historiography and New Imperial History, embracing the critiques that have followed Said's work. This allowed a reassessment of the possibility of understanding tsarist history, and Siberia's ambiguous position within the empire, from colonial perspectives, re-opening the recognition of the subaltern relationship between the Russian empire and its periphery. Peer-reviewed journals – such as *Ab Imperio* in Russia, and *Kritika* in the United States – spearheaded this development, putting aside the rigid divide between east and west as a starting point. Stemming from Bhabha's critiques, the recognition of the ambivalence of colonial discourses stretched to acknowledge the inadequacy of assuming stable identities and homogeneous forms of rule, which allowed for the investigation of the variability and contingency of colonial relations.⁴⁷ Hence, the problems derived from the awkward position of Russia in relation to Europe and Asia – and the difficulty of defining Russia's geographical identity – began to be overcome by acknowledging the co-constitutive nature of colonial individuals and the diversity of colonial experiences. By understanding the Russian empire as a space that was not necessarily related to essentialised geographical definitions (i.e. Europe and Asia), but to the ever-changing dynamics of empire building, this scholarship has suggested that it may be possible to undercut 'simple metropole-binary divides'.⁴⁸ New scholarship has therefore tended to see classical views of the Russian Empire as dominated by normative imperial discourses emanating from the centre. Instead, the current trend in historiography about Russia, in which this thesis is positioned, has provided accounts of the manner in which imperial subjects, communities and differently arranged groups negotiated their position within the empire, stressing individuals' agency in the face of imperial power, which has allowed for a re-emergence of colonial understandings of Siberia.⁴⁹

Despite the fruitful insights into the Russian empire's peripheries that these new avenues of research have provided, Siberia's condition continues to be, as the editors of *Kritika* have argued in a special edition about Siberian history, elusive. In their words, 'Siberia's status within the Russian Empire remains unsettled'⁵⁰ as its condition of being

⁴⁷ *Cultures of Empire: Colonisers in Britain and the Empire in Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, A Reader*, ed. by Catherine Hall (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 15.

⁴⁸ *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire: Imperial Career in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. by David Lambert and Alan Lester (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 10.

⁴⁹ Kimitaka Matsuzato, *Imperiology: From Empirical Knowledge to Discussing the Russian Empire* (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, 2007), p. 9.

⁵⁰ From the Editors, 'Siberia: Colony and Frontier', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 14.1 (2013), 1–4 (p. 1).

a frontier culturally and demographically appropriated by the Russian people, coexists with the study of ‘Tungus, Yakuts, Eskimos, and other ethnic groups [who] were most likely to feature in writings that stressed Siberia’s colonial status’.⁵¹ As Bassin has argued, Siberia has been signified ‘as a continuation or extension of the zone of Russian culture and society’⁵² while at the same time retaining its characteristic of being a foreign ‘desert of snow and ice’.⁵³ This undefined and ambiguous position that Siberia enjoys within the Russian state has been explained by Galya Diment and Yuri Slezkine, who argue that ‘only Siberia, alone among the country’s historic regions, has remained part of Russia while retaining a separate past and a separate present’.⁵⁴ In Jan Kusber’s opinion, ‘the conceptual “mastering” of Siberian space and of the history of its physical exploration and appropriation remains a challenging task for historians’⁵⁵ as the contiguous territorial arrangement of the Russian state has served the purpose of hiding its colonial nature.⁵⁶ Claudia Weiss has stretched the argument about the merging process between both geographical units even further by putting forward the idea that Siberia and Russia have been subjected to a reciprocal mental process of appropriation that makes it impossible to talk about one without referring to the other. In her words ‘Siberian identity first developed through Russian perception, which served as a mirror for self-reflection. For that reason, as well, Siberia is not thinkable without Russia’.⁵⁷

Following the same line, Willard Sunderland has argued that the absence of a developed form of Russian nationalism in 19th century Russia makes it possible to consider that the massive resettlement of peasants beyond the Urals – that occurred at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th as part of the efforts to relieve the agrarian crisis affecting European Russia – should not be understood in a colonial light. In his opinion, the massive movement of people towards Asiatic Russia was part of an internal policy that was marked by the cultural impotency of the supposed colonising

⁵¹ From the Editors, ‘Siberia, Colony and Frontier’, p. 1. This is also the case when analysing the research being done in the peer reviewed journal *Sibirica*, an example of which is Matthew P. Romaniello, ‘Decolonizing Siberian Minds’, *Sibirica*, 18.2 (2019), v–vi.

⁵² Bassin, ‘Inventing Siberia’, p. 766.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Diment and Slezkine, *Between Heaven and Hell*, p. 1.

⁵⁵ Jan Kusber, ‘Mastering the Imperial Space: The Case of Siberia Theoretical Approaches and Recent Directions of Research’, *Ab Imperio*, 2008.4 (2008), 52–74 (p. 74).

⁵⁶ See Alan Wood, *Russia’s Frozen Frontier: A History of Siberia and the Russian Far East 1581–1991* (London, New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011). Wood argues similarly about the difficulty for recognising Siberia’s colonial nature thanks to its continual territorial organisation.

⁵⁷ Claudia Weiss, ‘Nash: Appropriating Siberia for the Russian Empire’, *Sibirica*, 5.1 (2006), 141–55 (p. 151).

agents, that far from culturally appropriating the lands they moved to, were prone to become influenced by the conquered peoples residing in Asiatic Russia. In his opinion, the whole imperial edifice of the Russian empire could be refuted, as ‘the tsarist empire was undeniably an empire in the European mould, but the imperialism that built and sustained it was highly ambiguous and all its own’.⁵⁸

Rainbow has proposed a way of understanding this ambiguity by referring to the Russian empire’s policies in Siberia from the 1860s onwards as a ‘participatory autocracy’. In his opinion, the Russian empire was a state that allowed a growing involvement of rulers with the well-being of their subjects and, at the same time, it heavily depended on their subjects’ expertise to create policy. Rainbow argues that the dynamic society that historians have started to recognise in Russia by the end of the 19th century – which stands in contrast to the social stagnation found in previous scholarship about Russian society during this period⁵⁹ – happened partly because of and not ‘*in spite* of the autocratic state’.⁶⁰ Rainbow argues that the state involved intellectuals’ knowledge, despite their conflicting political allegiances, allowing for the flourishing of Siberian civil society and the improvement of locals’ conditions. Although Rainbow’s perspective does offer a useful way of understanding the common – and normative – goal of achieving progress that both *sibiriaki* and some metropolitan officials shared, this line of analysis is applicable only in moments when a convergence of interests between society and autocracy occurs. However, such confluence should be taken as a rather rare occurrence. While the personal nature of gubernatorial power in the provinces might have allowed for the temporary agreement of autocracy’s and locals’ goal of developing their regions, it was also likely that disagreement developed between local officials and provincial society. In such cases, provinces were subjected to the whims of authorities who did not necessarily have government’s or progressive interests in their horizon.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Sunderland, ‘Empire without Imperialism?’, p. 102. See also Mikail Mamedov, “‘Going Native’ in the Caucasus: Problems of Russian Identity, 1801-64’, *The Russian Review*, 67.2 (2008), 275–95; Willard Sunderland, ‘Russians into Iakuts? “Going Native” and Problems of Russian National Identity in the Siberian North, 1870s-1914’, *Slavic Review*, 55.4 (1996), 806–25; Anatoliĭ V. Remnev and Natal’ia Suvorova, “‘Russkoe delo’ na Asiatskikh okrainakh: russkost’ pod ugrozoĭ ili somnitel’nye kul’turtregery’, *Ab Imperio*, 2008.2 (2008), 157–222.

⁵⁹ See Joseph Bradley, ‘Subjects into Citizens: Societies, Civil Society, and Autocracy in Tsarist Russia’, *The American Historical Review*, 107.4 (2002), 1094–1123; Adele Lindenmeyr, “‘Primordial and Gelatinous’? Civil Society in Imperial Russia’, *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 12.3 (2011), 705–20.

⁶⁰ Rainbow, *Siberian Patriots*, p. 8., his italics.

⁶¹ See Tomohiko Uyama, ‘Repression of Kazakh Intellectuals as a Sign of Weakness of Russian Imperial Rule’, *Cahiers Du Monde Russe*, 56.4 (2015), 681–704. In this work, Uyama discusses the personal nature of provincial government in detail.

In this sense, the concept of the ‘official mind’ that Alexander Morrison applies to Russian expansion into Central Asia helps to illustrate the fact that state officials ‘on-the-spot’ had the opportunity to make decisions based on ‘a bundle of prejudices, assumptions, ambition, and ignorance, generally with very imperfect access to information, deeply affected by rumour, often reacting wildly and erratically to the pressure of “events”, and with multiple different identities and perspectives, of which [...] St. Petersburg were not necessarily the most important’.⁶² In this sense, although Rainbow’s analytical tool of ‘participatory autocracy’ becomes useful when analysing cooperation between metropolitan authorities in the provinces and the local population, it becomes less useful when the personal – as opposed to the institutional – nature of imperial power emerges in colonial settings: a key theme in this thesis.

Another aspect that has contributed to this picture of Siberian ambiguity has to do with a move towards the recognition of imperial uncertainty and the critiques of traditional accounts of imperial experiences, developed within the imperial turn in historiography during the last two decades. Working under these premises, researchers have added more nuanced understandings of relationships between people and structures within imperial settings. In this context of ever-changing imperial arrangements, numerous studies have shifted from traditional perceptions of the allocation of power within imperial structures – i.e. the empire’s capacity to unilaterally enforce its policies – to the recognition of subjects’ ability to assert their own interests when confronted with imperial power.⁶³ As Jeff Sahadeo has pointed out, ‘conquest and violence emerge as less

⁶² Alexander Morrison, ‘Twin Imperial Disasters. The Invasions of Khiva and Afghanistan in the Russian and British Official Mind, 1839–1842’, *Modern Asian Studies*, 48.1 (2014), 253–300 (p. 258).

⁶³ Numerous studies have followed this path in recent historiography. See Andrei Znamenski, ‘The “Ethnic of Empire” on the Siberian Borderland: The Peculiar Case of the “Rock People,” 1791–1878’, in *Peopling the Russian Periphery: Borderland Colonization in Eurasian History*, ed. by Nicholas B. Breyfogle, Abby M. Schrader, and Willard Sunderland (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 106–27; Abby M. Schrader, ‘Unruly Felons and Civilizing Wives: Cultivating Marriage in the Siberian Exile System, 1822–1860’, *Slavic Review*, 66.2 (2007), 230–56; Andrew A. Gentes, ‘Sakhalin’s Women: The Convergence of Sexuality and Penology in Late Imperial Russia’, *Ab Imperio*, 2003.2 (2003), 115–38; Andrew A. Gentes, ‘Vagabondage and the Tsarist Siberian Exile System: Power and Resistance in the Penal Landscape’, *Central Asian Survey*, 30.3–4 (2011), 407–21; Daniel Beer, ‘Penal Deportation to Siberia and the Limits of State Power, 1801–81’, *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 16.3 (2015), 621–650; Sergei Glebov, ‘Siberian Middle Ground: Languages of Rule and Accommodation on the Siberian Frontier’, in *Empire Speaks out: Languages of Rationalization and Self-Description in the Russian Empire*, ed. by Ilya Gerasimov, Jan Kusber, and Alexander Semyonov (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009), pp. 121–54; Sergei Glebov, ‘Siberian Ruptures: Dilemmas of Ethnography in an Imperial Situation’, in *An Empire of Others: Creating Ethnographic Knowledge in Imperial Russia and the USSR*, ed. by Roland Cvetkovski and Alexis Hofmeister (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2013), pp. 281–310; H. S. Hundley, ‘Defending the Periphery: Tsarist Management of Buriat Buddhism’, *The Russian Review*, 69.2 (2010), 231–50; Daniel R. Brower and Susan Layton, ‘Liberation through Captivity: Nikolai Shipov’s

central than accommodation and agency, as settlers and subject peoples alike negotiate with relatively small numbers of tsarist overlords and a distant capital'.⁶⁴

Following this trend, the involvement New Imperial History has had with Siberian studies has strived to show the room for manoeuvre that Siberians enjoyed, created by constant negotiations with the far-from-ubiquitous imperial structure. Open spaces left for individuals in tsarist administration allowed accommodation and constant evasion of imperial plans. Conversely, this scholarship stresses that imperial structures were conditioned by ever-changing contexts and numerous intersecting trajectories that, in local contexts, could match the state's effectiveness in manoeuvring imperial situations.

Siberia, the Bureaucracy and 'Harder' Aspects of Imperial Governance

The imperial turn's image of a flexible imperial context in Siberia can be partly explained by the topics that this historiography has chosen to develop under these premises. As has been recognised by Alexander Morrison, recently in 'Russian imperial historiography, the focus [has been] overwhelmingly cultural',⁶⁵ leaving harder-to-reach aspects of imperial experiences understudied. This has been the case with colonial bureaucracy, a key aspect in the understanding of the colonial nature of Siberia's relationship with the Russian state. Nevertheless, the study of Russian imperial administration in non-Russian historiography has had a long trajectory and, before the fall of the USSR and the adoption of the tenets of the imperial turn in historiography, it possessed a wide bibliography.

Before the opening of the archives in 1990s, this field was developed using a vast amount of published primary sources available to historians outside Russia. The difficulties in conducting research that academics experienced during most of the 20th

Adventures in the Imperial Borderlands', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 6.2 (2005), 259–79; Charles Steinwedel, 'Resettling People, Unsettling the Empire: Migration and the Challenge of Governance, 1861–1917', in *Peopling the Russian Periphery: Borderland Colonization in Eurasian History*, ed. by Nicholas B. Breyfogle, Abby M. Schrader, and Willard Sunderland (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 128–47; Lewis Siegelbaum, 'Those Elusive Scouts: Pioneering Peasants and the Russian State, 1870s–1950s', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 14.1 (2013), 31–58; Willard Sunderland, 'Peasant Pioneering: Russian Peasant Settlers Describe Colonization and the Eastern Frontier, 1880s–1910s', *Journal of Social History*, 34.4 (2001), 895–922.

⁶⁴ Jeff Sahadeo, 'Visions of Empire: Russia's Place in an Imperial World', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 11.2 (2010), 381–409 (p. 381).

⁶⁵ Alexander Morrison, 'The Pleasures and Pitfalls of Colonial Comparisons', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 13.4 (2012), 919–36 (p. 933).

century precluded them from consulting archival sources in Russia, forcing non-Russian researchers to rely on the material made available by the émigré society that settled outside Russia after the October Revolution. Memoirs of the *intelligentsia* and high-profile bureaucrats, as well as compilations of laws and regulations, served as the main sources for study in non-Russian historiography of the imperial period well into recent times.

This was the case with many leading scholars that have presented the most comprehensive analysis of tsardom's administrative structure. From Marc Raeff, in his groundbreaking study of the 1822 Siberian reforms,⁶⁶ to the works of Robbins, Mosse, Pearson, Starr, and Ledonne,⁶⁷ the greater bulk of evidence supporting their research came from published compilations of laws, the proceedings of Senate meetings available in volumes and memoirs of both Russian officials and foreign diplomats.⁶⁸ The practical difficulties of getting hold of archival material were in part responsible for this.⁶⁹

Just as the cultural orientation of current Siberian studies is explained by the availability of a wider range of sources, earlier scholarship's focus on the structural composition of imperial administration was partly shaped by the material available for

⁶⁶ Marc Raeff, *Siberia and the Reforms of 1822* (University of Washington Press, 1956).

⁶⁷ See Richard G. Robbins, 'Governors, Provincial Administration, and Local Self-Government in Late Imperial Russia: Guest Editor's Introduction', *Russian Studies in History*, 53.3 (2014), 3–6; Richard G. Robbins, *Tsar's Viceroys: Russian Provincial Governors in the Last Years of the Empire*, (Ithaca: Cornell Univ Pr, 1987); Werner E. Mosse, 'Russian Provincial Governors at the End of the Nineteenth Century', *The Historical Journal*, 27.01 (1984), 225–39; Thomas S. Pearson, *Russian Officialdom in Crisis: Autocracy and Local Self-Government, 1861–1900* (Cambridge England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Frederick S. Starr, *Decentralization and Self-Government in Russia, 1830–1870* (Princeton University Press, 2015); John P. Ledonne, 'Administrative Regionalization in the Russian Empire 1802–1826', *Cahiers Du Monde Russe*, 43.1 (2002), 5–34; John P. Ledonne, 'Russian governors general, 1775–1825 Territorial or functional administration?', *Cahiers Du Monde Russe*, 42.1 (2001), 5–30.

⁶⁸ Some examples of the published materials used by scholars in their research are: *Sobranie uzakonenii i rasporiazhenii pravitel'stva izdavaemye pri pravitel'stvuiushchem senate* (St. Petersburg, 1881); *Al'manakh sovremennykh russkikh deiatelei* (St. Petersburg 1897); M. L. Levenson ed. *Gosudarstvennyi sovet* (St. Petersburg 1907, Petrograd 1915); *Spiski grazhdanskim chinam pervykh trekh klassov*, annual publication 1842–1915, produced for restricted circulation by the Inspectorate Division of His Majesty's Own Chancellery; *Al'manakh sovremennykh Russkikh gosudarstvennykh deiatelei* (St. Petersburg, 1897); Poliakov I.S., Letters and reports about the journey to the valley of the Ob River// Notes of the Imperial Academy of Sciences. 1877. Vols. 30; Voronov A.G., Legal customs of Ostiaks in Western Siberia and Samoeds of Tomsk province // Notes of the Siberian Branch of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society for the Dept. of Ethnography. T. 18; Collection of folk legal customs (St. Petersburg, 1900); Tobol'sk Province: The list of inhabited localities according to the materials of 1868–1869. (St. Petersburg, 1871) *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii* (PSZ) 1649–1830, 45 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1830); *Istoriia pravitel'stvuiushchego senata za dvesti let, 1711–1911*, 5 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1911), *Sbornik istoricheskikh materialov*, 16 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1876–1917).

⁶⁹ Although some non-Russian scholars had the support of Soviet academics that provided archival material for non-Russian researchers. See for example Neil Weissman, 'Regular Police in Tsarist Russia, 1900–1914', *Russian Review*, 44.1 (1985), 45; Starr *Decentralization and Self-Government in Russia*.

their research. Since they could not get their hands on local material or administrative lower echelon archival sources, historians' concerns rested on imperial and metropolitan issues emanating from the centre, rather than local and provincial matters. Research agendas in this scholarship were concerned with how the empire was planned from the centre, tracing the impact of particular policies on the overall performance of the imperial structure, a structure that eventually proved faulty and cracked. The Cold War context also shaped a great deal of research on the administration of imperial Russia, since academics during most of the 20th century concentrated mostly on 19th century tsarist Russia, looking for the roots of the 1917 Revolution, and trying to understand the genesis of the utter mystery the USSR represented for Europe and the U.S.⁷⁰ Similarly, Soviet academics studying imperial structures, despite having a wider research scope, were constrained by Soviet ideological orthodoxy. Their research was bound to trace the dynamics of class struggle during the imperial period, a struggle that finally allowed the emergence of the people's will and the Party's leading role in society.⁷¹

This picture of a research field constrained by the scarcity of material available, which inevitably reproduced a metropolitan comprehension of Russian imperial administration, started to change after the fall of the USSR. According to Robbins, 'the 1990s and the first years of the twenty-first century can be considered a boom time for provincial studies, many of them conducted at regional universities'.⁷² As in every other aspect of research about Russia, historians began to profit from the possibility of accessing a wider variety of sources that helped expand the reach of imperial bureaucratic research. Both the scarcity of material and ideological biases that constrained a deeper enquiry into the structure and daily features of imperial administration began to fade, even creating opportunities for cooperation between Russian and foreign historians in their research.

However, the availability of new source material also changed the questions and aspects being studied regarding the Russian empire. Within the framework of the imperial turn in history, moreover, Sunderland argues that current historiography about the Russian empire has seen a 'growth [... that] has been uneven, with enormous

⁷⁰ Winston Churchill's description of Russia: 'It is a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma', 'The Churchill Society London. Churchill's Speeches'. <<http://www.churchill-society-london.org.uk/RusnEnig.html>> [accessed 24 August 2016].

⁷¹ See 'Interview with John P. LeDonne', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 14.4 (2013), 701–713.

⁷² Robbins, 'Governors', p. 4.

concentration on some periods and questions – perhaps too much – and not enough on others’.⁷³ The focus on the cultural aspects of imperial experiences and the soft spaces of imperial peripheries, have put topics of classic imperial studies out of fashion. Instead, as Monahan understands it, ‘subjugated peoples, accommodation, and resistance received tremendous attention’⁷⁴ while issues of governance, administration and legal systems were left behind. After almost 20 years of this historiography’s involvement with Russian imperial studies, there emerges a ‘necessity of selectively addressing some innovative approaches of postcolonial studies without leaving behind other promising models developed in the historiographies of continental empires (for instance, histories of governance and administration, national movements or political groups)’⁷⁵ as the editors of *Ab Imperio* have pointed out. While the focus on cultural aspects has been tremendously fruitful for addressing unseen aspects of Siberia’s population, it has also meant that the harder aspects of colonial existence have been neglected, providing an overall picture of the empire’s imperial existence that is unbalanced and with which it is difficult to see the wider picture, the framework within which subjugated populations acted.

Although there have been some efforts to address this topic’s neglect in current historiography, as evidenced in the edited volume published in 2010 by Sergei Liubichankovskii,⁷⁶ the main attempts to study imperial governance have been done within the field of Russian historiography called *kraevedenie*. This historiography of Russia’s local history has been able to go beyond the traditionally-metropolitan focus of the field, providing many regional approaches and expanding the 19th century time frame of previous scholarship. Practitioners of *kraevedenie*, or regional studies about Russia, have dealt with the lower echelons of imperial administration, looking for a better comprehension of day-to-day workings of bureaucrats across the empire, providing

⁷³ Sunderland, ‘What Is Asia to Us?’, p. 818.

⁷⁴ Erika Monahan, *The Merchants of Siberia: Trade in Early Modern Eurasia* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2016), p. 9.

⁷⁵ I. Gerasimov, Ilya, A. Kaplunovski, and A. Semyonov, ‘From the Editors’, *Ab Imperio*, 2008.2 (2008), 10–14 (p. 12).

⁷⁶ Sergeĭ Valentinovich Liubichankovskii et al., eds., *Mestnoe upravlenie v poreformennoĭ Rossii: mekhanizmy vlasti i ikh effektivnost’*. *Svodnye materialy zaochnoĭ diskussii* (Ekaterinburg and Izhevsk: Udmurtskii institut istorii, iazyka i literatury i Ural’skoe otdelenie RAN, 2010). In this volume scholars from Russia and abroad who study tsarist imperial administration, participated in a debate that aimed at providing a general comprehension of the state of current historiography on the matter and general conclusions that could help to navigate the vast amount of work done on regional Russia since the 1990s, a growing historiography known as *kraevedenie*.

original insights into hitherto unknown features of provincial life such as informal aspects of imperial governance and the significance of regions in imperial administration.

Despite these valuable contributions, this historiography has maintained a traditional approach in the analysis and perspectives it uses to understand imperial settings. As Schattenberg and Gilley have pointed out in a forum held in *Kritika* about Liubichankovskii's edited volume, the current form the field has embraced shows little regard for wider historiographic issues.⁷⁷ Instead, the empirical focus on deep archival research that concentrates on the supposedly neutral category of 'effectiveness', has overlooked the implications of modernity and rational industrial progress that underlie it, assumptions that have to be dealt with carefully when talking about imperial Russia.⁷⁸ This distance from discussions about the interpretation of data within the historiographical realm has produced research with a tendency to use key concepts and categories in acritical ways. As Susan Smith-Peters has argued, 'at the most basic level, theory is a way to make sense of the world, and its absence from *kraevedenie* constitutes a major weakness'.⁷⁹

One of the contributions this thesis therefore offers to the field of Siberian studies, and of imperial studies about the Russian empire more generally, is that of creating a bridge between the topics treated both in classical imperialism and *kraevedenie* with the historiography of the Russian empire from the tenets of the imperial turn. Acknowledgement of the discussions and concepts emanating from the wider debates about imperial formations will benefit from the topics and sources investigated in current imperial bureaucracy. Simultaneously, the parochialism that has prevented *kraevedenie* from engaging with this historiography could be overcome if new material in archives is brought together convincingly with the broader perspectives offered in postcolonial historical studies.⁸⁰ One of the aims of this thesis is to enable such a connection between local archival research and wider debates about the theoretical frames from which to study imperial formations, by putting forward an analysis of administrative structures from a different theoretical perspective.

⁷⁷ See Susanne Schattenberg and Christopher Gilley, 'Max Weber in the Provinces: Measuring Imperial Russia by Modern Standards', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 13.4 (2012), 889–902.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 892.

⁷⁹ Susan Smith-Peter, 'How to Write a Region: Local and Regional Historiography', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 5.3 (2004), 527–42 (p. 540).

⁸⁰ Catherine Evtuhov, 'Voices from the Regions: *Kraevedenie* Meets the Grand Narrative', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 13.4 (2012), 877–87.

From the exploration of these understudied aspects of imperial existence, this thesis settles the picture of generalised ambiguity in the comprehension of Siberia. By approaching the different mechanisms deployed to rule the region – that swerved between the processes of appropriation (*integral'nost'*) and differentiation (*otdel'nost'*) that Anatoliĭ Remnev has identified as the main features that characterised Siberia's relationship with the Russian state – it is possible to unveil the colonial underpinnings of the region's attachment to the Russian state.⁸¹ The ambiguity with which Russia has dealt with its Asiatic borderlands – from a Russian identification with Asia, to its perception of Asiatic Russia as the foreign land of exile and native cultures – has prevented the straightforward recognition of the colonial traits that have underpinned the long trajectory of Siberia's attachment to Russia and the similarly long trajectory of Siberian regionalism. Anna Fournier has argued that territorial 'contiguity made it difficult for a clear sense of self (and therefore of "otherness") to emerge,'⁸² a line of argument that has been extended by Jane Burbank who argues that besides the uncertain definition of the colonised 'they', there was not a clear sense of whom the coloniser 'we' referred to.⁸³

The colonising project the Russian empire developed was in many ways different from that of its European counterparts, especially since the racial categories that were policed in overseas colonial arrangements were not as central in the Russian context. As soon as the Russian state expanded its borders, local elites would be co-opted in order to maintain a colonial administration loyal to the centre. At the same time, the conquered were allowed to maintain their legal customs, thereby providing a certain degree of autonomy to the colonised communities. In time, this meant that local elites were incorporated into the ruling families of the empire, breaking the ethnic homogeneity of the imperial court, which created the difficulty of defining who the conquering 'we' was. Following this process, it was possible that a non-Russian local authority could own Russian serfs, an ethnic arrangement that rested upon the contingent nature of the rights given by the autocrat, which allowed for the 'allocation, reallocation and revocation of rights to different groups' until the 1905 revolution.⁸⁴ Russia's ruling elite was not a

⁸¹ Anatoliĭ V. Remnev, *Samoderzhavie i Sibir': administrativnaia politika v pervoi polovine XIX v.* (Omsk: Izdatel'stvo Omskogo universiteta, 1995), p. 15.

⁸² Anna Fournier, 'Reflective Colonization: Domination, Consent and the Self in Imperial Russia', *Russian History*, 39 (2012), 519–37 (pp. 520–21); See also Sahadeo, 'Visions of Empire'.

⁸³ See Jane Burbank, 'Rights of Difference: Law and Citizenship in the Russian Empire', in *Imperial Formations*, ed. by Ann Laura Stoler, Carole McGranahan, and Peter C. Perdue (SAR Press, 2007), pp. 77–111.

⁸⁴ Burbank, 'Rights of Difference', p. 99.

constituted group with inherent rights and conscious of their identity, but rather an assemblage of individuals dependant on the will of the autocrat to maintain their positions. This was very different from the corporate identities found among the nobilities of western European empires.

It is possible to argue, as does Burbank, that there was not a unified ruling elite that imposed its colonial domination over different peoples, but rather an empire-state, as opposed to an empire-nation configuration as found in the western side of Europe, which in Tlostanova's words, explains 'the instability and vagueness of the Russian imperial ideology in relation to race and religion'.⁸⁵ However, the sort of colonial arrangement that Siberia had was somewhat different to the existing contingencies in the Russian empire as it was not based on a local landed nobility or a recognisable local elite that governed in the empire's name, as occurred elsewhere. As stated before, the region was comprised mainly of nomadic, itinerant and settled native tribes who had a tributary relationship with imperial authorities who legally understood them as *inorodtsy*, and a majority of free land-owning peasants.⁸⁶ This does not mean that a racial dimension was absent from Siberia's social order but rather, that the complexities of Siberia's ethnic make-up transforms administrative policy and the study of civil society into a key entrance point for understanding the colonial underpinning of its attachment to the Russian empire. This arrangement makes the study of Siberia one of particular interest, as it reveals how the dynamics of imperial domination manifested themselves within a territory that had an ambiguous relationship with the centre of state power.

The trope of Russia's conflictive identification with its dominions to the east can itself be understood as a tool of imperial governance, a convenient device by which coloniality remains obscured. As Ann Laura Stoler has argued, the continuities of imperial arrangements are frequently overlooked and described as part of different complex identity formation processes as 'colonial entailments may lose their visible and identifiable presence in the vocabulary, conceptual grammar, and idioms of current concerns'.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Madina V. Tlostanova, 'How "Caucasians" Became Black? Imperial Difference and the Symbolization of Race', *Lichnost' kul'tura obshchestvo*, 16.3-4 (2014), 96-115 (p. 102).

⁸⁶ See John W. Slocum, 'Who, and When, Were the Inorodtsy? The Evolution of the Category of "Aliens" in Imperial Russia', *The Russian Review*, 57.2 (1998), 173-90.

⁸⁷ Ann Laura Stoler, *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2016), p. 4.

Looking at the specificities of colonial governance from a colonial framework allows the exposure of the inner workings of the process of creating differences between the two regions, a topic that has been kept occluded by the preservation of contradictory discourses about Siberia's conflictive belonging to the Russian cultural realm. By exposing Siberia to languages of inclusion while simultaneously placing the region as a geographic other, aspects of Siberia's colonial condition have been protected and kept as part of the particularities that characterise the region's relationship with the centre. By uncovering the colonial roots underlying Siberians' relationship with their metropolis, this thesis explores the 'transhistoric expansion of colonial domination and the perpetuation of its effects in contemporary times,'⁸⁸ as Mabel Moraña and others have argued. By doing so, it is possible to offer a perspective that can help to overcome the uncertain and ambiguous position that Siberia has enjoyed within Russian history.

Understanding Aspects of Siberia's Coloniality

This thesis views Siberia's colonial condition as a rule of difference that was exercised from the European capitals of the empire, engaging with the appropriation and differentiation processes that have propelled Siberia's ambiguous status with the Russian state. For this purpose, I take the definitions proposed by Jane Burbank and Frederic Cooper to identify and understand imperial settings, which they argue are extensive polities with an expansive drive that incorporates peoples and territories by force under the premise of maintaining their difference within a hierarchical system. In Burbank and Cooper's words, 'the concept of empire presumes that different peoples within the polity will be governed differently'.⁸⁹ It is therefore in the process of creating and inscribing differences between the ways in which places, peoples and territories are ruled that it is possible to identify a region's colonial condition. As Suny and Kivelson have also argued, imperial domination 'is exercised through difference, rather than through integration or assimilation'.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Mabel Moraña, Enrique Dussel, and Carlos A. Jáuregui, 'Colonialism and Its Replicants', in *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate*, ed. by Mabel Moraña, Enrique Dussel, and Carlos A. Jáuregui (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2008), pp. 1–22 (p. 2).

⁸⁹ Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2010), p. 8.

⁹⁰ Valerie Kivelson and Ronald Suny, *Russia's Empires* (New York: OUP USA, 2017), p. 191.

The inequality created in imperial settings, according to Burbank and Cooper, ‘was not natural; it took work’.⁹¹ However, this work did not entail a systematic crafting of a colonial project, as the process of creating an imperial situation was part of a changing historical trajectory, ‘a conjunction of outcomes that, though related and at times coordinated, were usually diffuse, disorganised and even contradictory’.⁹² The creation of differences between a colony and a metropolitan setting – ‘and the preservation of the alienness of the ruling group’⁹³ as Chatterjee has argued – was an overarching process that produced systems that could highlight the inclusionary aspects of the relationship, while providing the basis for keeping a differentiated organisation. In this sense, ‘all empires were to some degree reliant on both incorporation and differentiation [...] But transformations – wished for or unconsciously adopted – were more likely to be partial and could go in both directions’.⁹⁴

This thesis analyses the policies of incorporation that ruled Siberia during the second half of the 19th century, such as the administrative incorporation of western Siberia to the bureaucratic structures of European Russian and the creation of the first Siberian university in 1888, against the background of measures that ensured the preservation of differences between the metropolitan core and Siberia, as exemplified by the non-application of *zemstva* beyond the Urals and the maintenance of the exile system in the region. In this sense, this thesis digs into the establishment of Siberia’s coloniality, that is, the process by which, although incorporated in nominal equality to the Russian state, the region was subjected to a ‘power structure [that] was, and still is, the framework within which operate the other social relations of classes or estates,’⁹⁵ in Aníbal Quijano’s formulation. This thesis also follows the steps of Michael Hechter’s search for the conditions that enabled the differentiation process between contiguous territories and groupings developed in his work *Internal Colonialism* (1975),⁹⁶ seeing how the crafting of differences in colonial settings ‘affected the entire distribution of power’, establishing

⁹¹ Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, p. 12.

⁹² *Colonialism and Culture*, ed. by Nicholas B. Dirks (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), p. 7.

⁹³ Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 10.

⁹⁴ Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, p. 13.

⁹⁵ Aníbal Quijano, ‘Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality’, *Cultural Studies*, 21.2–3 (2007), 168–78 (p. 168).

⁹⁶ See Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536–1966* (London: Routledge, 1975).

the possibilities that colonised peoples had for subverting their position within an imperial system.⁹⁷

Within this framework for the comprehension of colonial settings, this thesis undertakes the task of identifying the mechanisms that enabled the separation and disparity of both regions that were put in place during the second half of the 19th century in Siberia. Looking at the bureaucratic systems that were in place both in European Russia and Siberia, I explore how the crafting of these administrative structures – and the maintenance of their different compositions – affected and created the unequal development of civil society in these two regions during the second half of the 19th century. By doing so, I argue that St. Petersburg’s policies towards Siberia limited the development of the group of *intelligenty* that were growing in the region, stymying a political activity that was regarded with anxiety from the imperial centre due to the regionalist tendencies already existing in Siberia. Consequently, I argue that Siberians’ only possibility to engage in policy-making instances was through their participation and debate in the local press, as inclusion within the higher echelons of local administrative structures of Siberian administration was actively rejected while being reserved for Russians coming from the European sections of the empire. Using the language of colonialism and the tools developed in the imperial turn in historiography allows me to stabilise our understanding of Siberia’s condition while re-signifying older interpretations of the region’s position within the Russian empire.

Engaging with imperial bureaucracy, on the one hand, and the development of civil society, on the other, entails an active consideration of the social groups that represented most of the individuals manning imperial administration and participating in Russia’s nascent civil society. The *intelligentsiia*, the sons of priests (*popovichi*), the people without rank (*raznochintsy*) and the professional middle-men that participated in organs of self-government, who occupied the lower echelons of imperial administration, and who debated through the expanding press outlets in the second half of the 19th century, take centre stage in this thesis. The reason for their importance here lies in the fact that the rule of difference produced in the European capitals of the empire was designed specially to contain these people’s political engagement, despite affecting a much wider social realm. As a group, these middle-men took part in the empire’s nascent

⁹⁷ Aníbal Quijano, ‘Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America’, *International Sociology*, 15.2 (2000), 215–32 (p. 218).

civil society, developing a broad sense of responsibility for bridging the societal gap existing between Russian elites and the newly liberated mass of peasants.⁹⁸

Russia, after the Great Reforms of the 1860s, saw an expanded political activity among classes that had been traditionally left out of the political debate, opening spaces in society that had been hitherto scant and reserved for the privileged classes. The state's intention to expand their reach into society – in order to harness social resources more rationally – required the help of these professionals who were being taught in the educational establishments that started, during this period, to accept people of different social origins. However, this group of educated individuals increasingly saw how they were 'denied a fully meaningful participation in Russian political life by the autocracy's insistence upon the indivisibility of monarchical power'.⁹⁹ This was especially true in the case of educated Siberians who were historically ruled by a metropolitan elite that was regarded as self-serving and generally harmful for the region's development. Therefore, the educated public's 'critical attitude toward conditions in society and government [... and their] desire to change those conditions'¹⁰⁰, that was a common feature among these individuals, developed in Siberia a strong sense of their need to engage politically in order to bring about the changes that were needed in the region.

This thesis traces the positions these individuals attained and were allowed to access, identifying them as the vantage point from which it is possible to recognise more fully the colonial dynamics described and to answer my key research questions. As such, other social groups that were interrelated with Siberia's colonial condition are referred to in less detail, including, for example, the large exiled population in the region. Although their presence is acknowledged – as political activity in the region was often associated with them, with exile being a topic that Siberian intellectuals referred to frequently when discussing the region's position in the empire – they do not take centre stage in this analysis as their political involvement demanded reactions from the state that criminalised, rather than institutionalised, their condition. In the same way, Siberia's native population – which was also present in Siberian intellectuals' concerns and public

⁹⁸ See Hosking, *Russia, People and Empire*.

⁹⁹ William Leatherbarrow and Derek Offord, 'Introduction', in *A History of Russian Thought*, ed. by William Leatherbarrow and Derek Offord (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 3–16 (p. 7).

¹⁰⁰ Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter, 'The Groups Between: Raznochintsy, Intelligentsia, Professionals', in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, ed. by Dominic Lieven (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 245–63 (p. 252).

arguments – were usually barred from and unwilling to participate both in journalistic activity and administrative structures, and thus are not central to my analysis.

The focus on the group of middle-men allows me to delve into the grey areas of difference-crafting in the Russian imperial landscape as – in the absence of European Russian nobility or a large body of co-opted native nobility in the region – the group of Siberian professionals and intellectuals were the most likely social group that metropolitan authorities could identify with. These Siberians were the people with whom – out of the existing social groups in the region, that is, exiles and natives – the imperial centre was naturally inclined to rely on in search for locals' loyalty. Therefore, looking at how this group was actively and creatively limited in their participation in administrative structures provides insights into the ways in which the Russian empire understood and constructed social and geographical hierarchies within the imperial space.

Methodologies and Argument Structure

Identifying the mechanisms that allowed for the creation of differences between Siberia and the metropolitan centre demands the use of different approaches, and a diverse array of primary and secondary sources. In this sense, I have developed an analysis that has relied both on general overviews of the conditions of imperial governance throughout the empire, while also producing detailed and locally based explorations of Siberia's colonial condition. It has been an exercise of constant zooming in and out of Siberia to understand the wider panorama in which Siberians lived, while simultaneously looking at on-the-spot mechanisms that gave flesh to the differences experienced east of the Urals. The four chapters to follow are a consequence of this exercise and the result of the analysis of different set of sources and approaches in each chapter.

Chapter 2 considers the wider imperial panorama and explores the context in which the Russian empire found itself at the beginning of the period under study. Here, I focus my attention on the Great Reforms that Alexander II instigated in order to take Russia out of the stagnation that was considered the cause of the Crimean War disaster. More specifically, this section provides an analysis of the self-government institutions – *zemstva* – that were put in place in the European provinces of the empire, looking at the consequences their implementation had for the political development of the middle social groups who occupied most of the positions made available in them. This section draws

on primary sources including contemporaries' reactions and observations about these reforms both in Siberia and the metropolis. Essays, memoirs, books and journalistic pieces found in Tomsk University's (*Tomskii gosudarstvennyi universitet*) digital collections and repositories, in the Presidential Library (*Presidentskaia biblioteka*), and in the Public Historical Library of the Russian State (*Gosudarstvennaia publichnaia istoricheskaia biblioteka Rossii*), were analysed thematically in order to understand the terms used in debates about the reforms that were implemented during this period. Gaining access to these materials allowed me to contrast the effects of the *zemstva* reform in European Russia with what was happening in Siberia, a region that, until the end of the tsarist regime, was excluded from the *zemstva* purview. I argue that such exclusion, and the preservation of it, can be understood as part of the imperial government's anxieties about the development of a political *intelligentsia* in Siberia that could challenge imperial authority in the region.

Chapter 3 offers a case study that analyses the inner workings of the imperial administrative structure existing in Siberia during this period. Zooming into Siberia, this section looks at the 'mechanical or "nuts and bolts" aspects of the empire's administration that are least discussed'¹⁰¹, as Robert Geraci argues, to understand how the construction and preservation of difference was manifested in bureaucratic structures. To illustrate this point, I analyse one of the two main territorial divisions existing in western Siberia: the province of Tomsk. As discussed above, this was a period when metropolitan involvement in Siberia intensified, and one of the consequences of this greater intervention was that the inclusionary and exclusionary measures the imperial government deployed in the region were felt more heavily in this frontier region. As one of the westernmost sections of Siberia, Tomsk represented the limit of the core provinces of 'internal Russia', the frontier that European Russia was looking to engulf.

This chapter argues that, in addition to the empire-wide mechanisms for stymying the political development of Siberia's *intelligentsia* – such as being barred from having *zemstva* in Siberia – there were also localised strategies that maintained imperial control over the region unchallenged. The preservation of an imperial administrative elite in the region that came from European Russia, and the continual legal processes opened against rank-and-file, locally born officials, kept Siberians from attaining higher positions in the management of their region. I argue that, from St. Petersburg and Moscow, the absence

¹⁰¹ Robert Geraci, 'On "Colonial" Forms and Functions', *Slavic Review*, 69.1 (2010), 180–84 (p. 180).

of a noble landowning elite in Siberia was regarded with suspicion. Therefore, there were continual efforts to keep the reins of imperial administration in Siberia in the hands of reliable and loyal European Russians instead of giving them to Siberians who had already awakened imperial anxieties during the 1860s.

Primary sources for this chapter were found in the State Archive of the Tomsk Province (*Gosudarstvennyiĭ arkhiv Tomskoiĭ oblasti*). Working in this archive allowed me to gain access to the files of the Provincial Board – or *Gubernskoe pravlenie* – which was a pivotal institution in provincial governance. Formed by the metropolitan elite in Tomsk, its main activities were maintaining administrative discipline and the correct functioning of imperial bureaucracy. Performing thematic analysis of these hand-written documents allowed me to understand the different strategies deployed by the bureaucratic elites for sustaining the division between metropolitan elite functionaries and local middle and lower officials. Likewise, looking at the Governor’s Most Loyal Reports (*Vsepoddanneishie otchëty gubernatorov*) found in the Russian State Historical Archive (*Rossiĭskiiĭ gosudarstvennyiĭ istoricheskiĭ arkhiv*) in St. Petersburg, I was able to observe how these provincial bureaucratic elites portrayed their activities to the central authorities, which was a useful source for understanding their activities in Tomsk. The contrasts and similarities between governors’ portrayal of imperial governance to central authorities, and their way of dealing locally with Siberians officials’ indiscipline, provided insight into understanding how local issues were projected to the wider imperial panorama.

Chapter 4 widens the analytical lens to study the late development of Siberia’s press. This section argues that Siberian news outlets played an important role as the place in which the local *intelligentsiia* had the opportunity to put forward their opinions of and engagement with the social body that was denied them within administrative spheres. By looking at debates about Siberia’s administrative structure – which included discussing the uneven implementation of reforms throughout the empire and the role that locally-born middle and lower officials had in imperial administration – I argue that Siberia’s civil society developed alongside of a relatively free press from the late 1870s onwards. Imperial authorities on-the-spot as well as in the metropolitan centre saw the press as a useful source to measure societal allegiances and retrieve local information. This assessment of the usefulness of the press permitted Siberians to engage, even if only discursively, with imperial policy. Through their participation in these outlets, they were able to confront and challenge authorities’ administrative measures, taking part in debates with state funded news outlets that were also functioning in Siberia, to an extent that has

previously been neglected in historiography about the region. The material used in this chapter came from Tomsk University's digital collections of Siberian newspapers, the repositories of the Presidential Library, and the Public Historical Library of the Russian State.

In Chapter 5, this dissertation's last chapter, I use the zooming tool again to focus in on the life of a Siberian-born *popovich* who roamed the empire, crossing the Urals in both directions several times during of his life. Using a case study approach, I analyse the career of the Siberian-born writer Grigoriï Zakharovich Eliseev (1821–1881), whose trajectory and experiences illustrate the issues discussed thus far. Using biographical accounts written by contemporaries, as well as his written work as a publicist in metropolitan thick journals, I provide an embodied example of the ways in which Siberians experienced their colonial status within the empire. Looking at his territorial movement that took him from the provincial town of Spasskoe in Tomsk, to finish his life in the centre of imperial activity, St. Petersburg, this chapter provides insight into the life of a middle-man, the son of a parish priest who, as an *intelligent* who wished to participate in the general movement forward of the reform years, discovered that it was almost impossible to do so from his native region. For this reason, he decided to cross the Urals westward, in order to achieve his goal of getting involved in the growing social and political landscape that was developing in the empire.

By zooming in and out in this way, this thesis suggests that a colonial outlook can be detected in the way that the imperial government dealt with Siberia during the second half of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. The colonial system manifested itself in a series of rules and effects that 'was never so omniscient nor secure to imagine itself as totalising'.¹⁰² In this sense, the colonial outlook Siberians experienced in the Russian empire amounted to an aggregation of metropolitan attitudes and prejudices that were not systematic, but nonetheless allowed for the construction and maintenance of Siberia's subaltern condition within the empire. As Nicholas Dirks expressed it, 'while colonial rulers were always aware that their power was more dependent on their knowledge, they themselves were never similarly aware of all the ways in which knowledge was, in any direct or strategic sense, power'.¹⁰³

Colonial difference was preserved through the maintenance of imperial control in Siberia and by the active sidelining of its *intelligentsia*, who were not able to participate

¹⁰² Dirks, *Colonialism and Culture*, p. 7.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

in the expansion of organs of self-government, which were developing elsewhere and in the centre of the empire. By the same token, keeping Siberians from the higher echelons of imperial administration, while providing them few means for expressing themselves politically, added to the contradictory metropolitan strategy of the integration and exclusion of Siberia. In this sense, I argue that St. Petersburg's desire to integrate Siberia with the metropolitan centre in order to secure the empire's integrity – as was evident in this period's greater metropolitan engagement with the regions east of the Urals – was undermined by exclusionary measures that maintained the differences between the two regions of the empire. Consequently, this thesis argues that studying Siberia through a colonial framework can help to overcome the uncertainties that have riddled its position within the empire, providing a useful perspective from which we can understand Siberia's past and present place within the Russian state.

Chapter 2: The *Zemstva* and the Reform of the Russian State

By the late 1850s, Russian authorities had to reconsider many aspects of the empire's social structure as well as its position within the context of emerging European nations. Russia's defeat in the Crimean War was understood to have exposed a structure unable to cope with the challenges posed by Russia's apparently more advanced neighbours. Starting before the accession of Alexander II, discussions about Russia's identity and future path were turning into one of the great controversies of Russia's intellectual milieu. The empire had been exposed as an imperial giant with feet of clay; at this moment, the autocracy had to decide how and where to steer the empire in order to pull it out from the difficult position in which it had been left.

The Great Reforms carried out by Alexander II during the 1860s must be understood in this context. During the second half of the 19th century, the growing atmosphere of European competition presented a need for Russia's structure to be reformed. It required stability and the means to sustain its position and possessions in an environment in which its European competitors strived to assert their interests through any available means. The Great Reforms that took place under Alexander II in the 1860s were designed to remove any doubts about Russia's great power status within Europe, a position highlighted at the time by the conservative historian and journalist Mikhail Petrovich Pogodin who, in the aftermath of the Crimean War and the death of Nicholas I, affirmed that 'Russia was in need of a different system'.¹ The adjustments Russia needed, in Pogodin's opinion, were relevant not only in the European core of the Russian empire. Siberia, since the annexation of the Amur during the 1850s, was increasingly acquiring geopolitical and symbolic relevance in a period of intense interimperial relations in the Asia Pacific region, extending the territorial scope that the administrative overhaul needed to address.² These reforms were therefore a move towards regaining lost prestige and a way to reassure its population of the Russian state's viability.³

In this chapter, I discuss these reforms, their reach in the empire-wide context and the consequences of their implementation, as the large scope of these changes had effects that were unforeseen by imperial authorities. The Great Reforms, despite being fraught

¹ Mikhail Petrovich Pogodin, *Istoriko-politicheskie pis'ma i zapiski v prodolzhenii Krymskoj vojni* (Moscow: Izdanie V. M. Frish, 1874), p. 317.

² Mark Bassin, 'The Russian Geographical Society, the "Amur Epoch," and the Great Siberian Expedition 1855–1863', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 73.2 (1983), 240–56.

³ Larissa Zakharova, 'The Reign of Alexander II: A Watershed?', in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, ed. by Dominic Lieven (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), II, 593–616 (p. 594).

with contradictions, touched upon different aspects of the empire's social and political make-up. They included the gradual liberation of serfs who, although subjected to redemption payments that effectively maintained their subordinate condition in the countryside, passed from being the movable property of the landed gentry to being subjects with a right to own land;⁴ the overhaul of the court system that went from being separated according to *sosloviia* estates to a unified, all-class structure that introduced civil juries in their deliberation process, while keeping a separate court system for peasants;⁵ the relaxation of press censorship that eliminated preliminary controls and subjected publications to after-release checks;⁶ and giving universities more autonomy to open their ranks to non-military students, widening the social diversity of entrants.⁷

In this chapter I focus specifically on one of the links within the chain of proposed plans to modernise the empire: the creation of self-government institutions at the provincial and district levels, called *zemstva*, and in particular on the consequences unleashed by this reform. It was not implemented throughout the whole imperial territory, however. Despite recognising that the problems these institutions were supposed to solve were empire-wide issues, the *zemstvo* system was not universally applied: a number of Russian colonial possessions were initially left out of the *zemstva* expansion process, i.e. the Baltic regions, Poland, the Caucasus, Belarus, Central Asia and Siberia. In Siberia's case, *zemstva* were not implemented despite the administrative provincialisation its western half experienced during the same period. This meant that Siberia was incorporated to the administrative status of European Russian regions while at the same time being barred from acquiring the institutions that operated in the core territories, leaving a large section of the empire bound to the administrative structure that the European territories had decisively rejected. This chapter addresses the consequences

⁴ See David Moon, *The Abolition of Serfdom in Russia, 1762–1907* (New York: Longman, 2001); Tracy Dennison, *The Institutional Framework of Russian Serfdom* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Robert P. Donnorummo, 'The Peasants of Central Russia: Reactions to Emancipation and the Market 1850–1900' (New York: Garland, 1987); Irina Paperno, 'The Liberation of the Serfs As a Cultural Symbol', *The Russian Review*, 50.4 (1991), 417–36.

⁵ See Jane Burbank, 'An Imperial Rights Regime: Law and Citizenship in the Russian Empire', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 7.3 (2006), 397–431; Jane Burbank, *Russian Peasants Go to Court: Legal Culture in the Countryside, 1905–1917* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

⁶ See Charles A. Ruud, 'Russia', in *The War for the Public Mind: Political Censorship in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2000), pp. 239–72; Alexander Polunov, *Russia in the Nineteenth Century: Autocracy, Reform, and Social Change, 1814–1914*, ed. by Thomas C. Owen and Larissa Zakharova, trans. by Marshall Shatz (London; New York: Routledge, 2005); Charles A. Ruud, *Fighting Words: Imperial Censorship and the Russian Press, 1804–1906* (University of Toronto Press, 2009); Daniel Balmuth, 'Origins of the Russian Press Reform of 1865', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 47.109 (1969), 369–88; Effie Ambler, *Russian Journalism and Politics: The Career of Aleksei S. Suvorin, 1861–1881* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1972).

⁷ Harley D. Balzer, *Russia's Missing Middle Class: The Professions in Russian History* (Armonk, N.Y.: Routledge, 1995), pp. 10–12.

unleashed by *not* applying *zemstva* and the meaning this policy had for understanding Siberia's coloniality.

To comprehend why the decision to avoid *zemstva*'s introduction in Siberia had a colonial dimension, it is necessary to analyse the consequences of its introduction in the European section of the Russian empire, as they reveal the implications of their absence in Siberia. The implementation of *zemstva* mobilised the empire politically as they introduced a dynamism into the civic realm that, whether foreseen by the legislators or not, changed the whole empire's political landscape. This development can be explained as *zemstva* fostered the emergence of the so-called third element – the group of professionals that occupied most of the positions in these new institutions – as a political actor within the empire, a novelty in the empire's political arena even when their activities in the local and empire-wide public sphere were curtailed by the government.⁸ The decision to leave Siberia outside these institutions' frame until the very fall of the empire, even after they had expanded into other colonial domains later in the 19th century, brings up questions regarding the type of relationship that the metropolis was building with its Asiatic section.⁹ The latter is noticeable especially since, during the same period in question, a series of other measures were being put in place for the provincialisation – or rather, assimilation – of Siberia, a process that helped in fostering the ambiguous position held by the region in Russian culture and politics.

From the centre's perspective, the serfs' liberation meant that there was a need to regulate the relationship between the newly liberated serfs and former serf-owners, and

⁸See Fedor A. Petrov, 'Crowning the Edifice: The Zemstvo, Local Self-Government, and the Constitutional Movement, 1864–1881', in *Russia's Great Reforms, 1855–1881* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 197–213; Alexei Volvenko, 'The Zemstvo Reform, the Cossacks and Administrative Policy on the Don 1864–1882', in *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700–1930*, Indiana-Michigan Series in Russian and East European Studies (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), pp. 348–65; S. Frederick Starr, 'Local Initiative in Russia before the Zemstvo', in *Russia's Great Reforms, 1855–1881* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 5–30; Thomas Porter and William Gleason, 'The Zemstvo and the Transformation of Russian Society', in *Emerging Democracy in Late Imperial Russia: Case Studies on Local Self-Government (The Zemstvos), State Duma Elections, the Tsarist Government, and the State Council Before and During World War*, ed. by Mary Schaeffer Conroy (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1998), pp. 60–83; Kermit E. McKenzie, 'Zemstvo Organization and Role within the Administrative Structure', in *The Zemstvo in Russia: An Experiment in Local Self-Government*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 33–78; Roberta Thompson Manning, 'The Zemstvo and Politics, 1864–1914', in *The Zemstvo in Russia*, ed. by Terence Emmons and Wayne S. Vucinich (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Charles E. Timberlake, 'The Zemstvo and the Development of a Russian Middle Class', in *Between Tsar and People* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 164–79; *Emerging Democracy in Late Imperial Russia: Case Studies on Local Self-Government (The Zemstvos), State Duma Elections, the Tsarist Government, and the State Council Before and During World War*, ed. by Mary Schaeffer Conroy (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1998).

⁹ The introduction of *zemstva* in the Russian empire occurred in different phases. The first wave saw only 18 provinces affected. By the 1870s, it had expanded to 34 provinces, reaching its peak of 43 of the 84 imperial provinces on the eve of World War I. See Figure 1: Zemstva's Territorial Expansion through Time.

since Siberia had neither – as there were hardly any serfs in Siberia, and, consequently, no serf-owning nobility – it made sense to argue that *zemstva* had no need to be applied in this region. However, Siberia’s exclusion from these self-government bodies would seem to rest on motives that went beyond the institution’s task of managing the relationship between the nobility and the peasantry. Instead, Siberia’s exclusion was related to the group of people in between those two: the middle classes of priests’ sons, impoverished nobles, clerical workers, exiles and *raznochintsy* from which the Siberian *intelligentsiia* drew most of its members. These groups lacked spaces for participation in decision-making in their provinces’ administration, in contrast to the possibilities similar social groups enjoyed in European Russia. This chapter explores how the administrative measures taken to tackle bureaucratic problems, both in the European section of the empire and in Siberia, reflected a colonial gaze that involved the creation of difference in a colonial setting through both territorial differentiation and administrative means.

The exclusion of Siberia from the *zemstva* reforms might initially appear to be a coincidental rather than deliberate neglect, the result of imperial contingencies that created practical barriers to its application. It could also be explained as the frustrated intentions of an imperial polity that, cut short from further development by the Revolution in 1917, was unable to integrate Siberia despite fully planning to do so once Siberia had achieved a requisite level of cultural development.¹⁰ However, this thesis argues that the differentiated allocation of rights was nurtured by an understanding of the region as in a constant state of becoming, and that this could be as efficient a tool for generating colonial differentiation as racial categories were in other imperial formations.¹¹

Drawing on primary source material from contemporaries’ reactions and observations of these reforms – both in Siberia and the metropolis – in the form of essays, memoirs, books and journalistic pieces, this chapter firstly discusses the context in which the *zemstvo* reform was developed, the reasons behind it, and the historiographical discussions regarding its interpretation. Then, it provides an interpretation of the administrative effects of the reform’s implementation in the European section of the empire, looking specifically at the constitution of a separate administrative structure in

¹⁰ This argument is present in works describing the process of Siberian colonisation as the natural expansion of the Russian state discussed in Chapter 1. See for example Donald W. Treadgold, *Great Siberian Migration* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

¹¹ See Alexander Morrison, ‘Metropole, Colony, and Imperial Citizenship in the Russian Empire’, *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 13.2 (2012), 327–64; *Imperial Formations*, ed. by Ann Laura Stoler, Carole McGranahan, and Peter C. Perdue (SAR Press, 2007); Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865–1923* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007); *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge and Practices, 1800–1950*, ed. by David Hoffmann and Yanni Kotsonis (London; New York: Springer, 2000).

the European Russian provinces and its impact in the development of a dynamic political landscape. This impact is then contrasted with *zemstva*'s absence in the Siberian context, examining the effect of its omission on the development of local middle classes and their political participation. As such, this chapter enhances the existing scholarship on *zemstva* by discussing the effects they produced by *not* being implemented, providing a new perspective on the Great Reforms. By doing so, it argues that the absence of *zemstva* in Siberia was not the product of practical issues related to purely managerial problems, but, rather, a way of stymying the growth of political activity among Siberia's *intelligenty*.

The Great Reforms: Definitions, Significance and Territorial Limits

After the reign of Nicholas I, the accession in 1855 of Alexander II began a period of great changes for the Russian empire. These reforms brought about challenges that required elaborated solutions that had an impact on the empire's social structure. For this reason, to understand how the reorganisation of the empire affected Siberia, it becomes necessary to define the implications these reforms had on the European Russian section of the empire.

The Crimean War not only showed Russia's military and strategic deficiencies, it was also interpreted as evidence that profound changes were needed in its social structure in order to maintain its cohesion. In this sense, the topic of the liberation of serfs, which had been discussed but mostly suppressed by consecutive conservative policies, was forced upon the autocracy as one of the main issues to act upon.¹² This topic had been discussed for some time by both the Slavophile movement and progressive forces within and beyond the borders of the empire, in the form of Herzen and his uncensored journals.¹³ Even among the noble and serf-owning individuals it was possible to find support for this measure, as recorded by Aleksey Adrianovich Golovachev in his book about the first decade of existence of the reforms:

¹² Since the time of Catherine II, serfdom had been a complicated topic which the autocracy had avoided. Novikov in his satirical journals and Radishchev's *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* (1790) denounced its existence as 'barbaric'. Western and Baltic regions of the empire had by the beginning of the 19th century liberated serfs within the Russian empire, but their move was of small political and social significance in the imperial economic structure.

¹³ For discussion about emancipation by Slavophiles see Michael Hughes, 'State and Society in the Political Thought of the Moscow Slavophiles', *Studies in East European Thought*, 52.3 (2000), 159–83 (pp. 159–83); Larissa Zakharova, 'Autocracy and the Reforms of 1861–1874 in Russia, Choosing Paths of Development', in *Russia's Great Reforms, 1855–1881*, ed. by Ben Eklof, John Bushnell, and Larissa Zakharova (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 19–39 (p. 22).

We very much remember the time immediately preceding the liberation of the peasants; I remember the animation and hopes that had reached the best part of our society after a long and tense period of stagnation and the efforts of the defenders of the old order to stop it or give another direction to the cause of liberation.¹⁴

The call for reform was mounting and the new emperor was quick to realise that the political atmosphere needed to be relieved of some pressure. In a speech made in 1856, the emperor said that ‘it was much better that this [the emancipation of the peasants] comes from above than from below’¹⁵, referring to the possibility that inaction could prove to be a worse plan than tackling the need to modernise the empire via the autocracy’s own hands.

Signs pointing towards a will from the throne to allow for changes in one of the most fundamental pillars of Russian society – namely, serfdom – must also be read as an acknowledgement that the state of the public treasury was far from healthy and that it was necessary to effect profound transformations to push Russia towards the transition from a servile to hired labour economy. It was already evident to state officials that such a change would improve the efficiency of Russian agriculture.¹⁶ As recalled by the Siberian lawyer Mikhail Izrailevich Alt’shuller, ‘the serfdom of the peasant multitude was not only a brake on cultural and social progress, but also a considerable cause of the financial crisis’.¹⁷

Russia was therefore beginning to turn away from the conservative course that it had taken for most of the 19th century and for some observers a new path of modernity and transformations lay ahead.¹⁸ The Slavophile and noble Russian bureaucrat Aleksander I. Koshelev recalled that he even tried to convince an old acquaintance of his – a Russian exile living in the Alps – to return to Russia in 1866. In his memoirs he wrote that ‘I persistently tried to persuade him to return to Russia, where *zemstvo* institutions, open legal proceedings, and some press freedom opened the possibility of civic activity for all of us’.¹⁹

¹⁴ Alekseï Adrianovich Golovachev, *Desiat’ let reform 1861–1871* (St. Petersburg: Izdanie Vestnika Evropy, 1872), p. 7.

¹⁵ Quoted in Zakharova, ‘Autocracy and the Reforms’, p. 20.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁷ Mikhail Izrailevich Alt’shuller, ‘*Zemstvo v Sibiri*’ (Imperatorskago Tomskago universiteta, iuridicheskii fakul’tet, 1916), p. 22.

¹⁸ Zakharova, ‘Autocracy and the Reforms’, p. 23.

¹⁹ Aleksandr Ivanovich Koshelev, *Zapiski Aleksandra Ivanovicha Kosheleva (1812–1883 gody)* (Berlin: B. Behr’s Verlag, 1884), p. 183.

As the year of 1861 dawned, a major milestone in the process by which the majority of Russia's serfs were liberated from their imposed bond was announced. The deep-rooted institution of serfdom that had been the basis of autocratic power since the 16th century, started to give way to a new panorama. The liberation of the serfs was a slow and phased process, fraught with contradictions that, despite formally liberating privately-owned serfs, bound them through debt in the form of redemption payments that were only abolished in 1907 by Nicholas II.²⁰ However, from a legal point of view, privately-owned serfs started to be considered subjects of the empire rather than the movable property of landed gentry. The change affected more than 20 million peasants in the empire-wide panorama, while it also gave the newly liberated serfs rights to own property. The latter development, the state hoped, would eventually transform them into capitalist farmers who would contribute to the wealth of the empire or would push them into industrial activities, a long-forgotten sector in Russia's economy.

However, the serfs' liberation also meant that peasants were passed from the direct administration of the landed gentry – who collected their taxes, organised their military duties and oversaw their court system – to the state administration, a system that had already been struggling to cope with society's demands well before the peasants' liberation. The administrative void created by emancipation was coupled with government's concerns about the consequences this could bring to the Russian social edifice as the nobility, 'the traditional social base of autocratic power,'²¹ was being stripped of the basis of their wealth. At the same time, the newly liberated peasants' reactions to freedom were unfathomable and many landowners feared 'the consequences of freedom [for their serfs], knowing the unbridled nature of the masses'.²²

It was in this context that the *zemstvo* reform of 1864 came to fill the administrative gap created by serfs' liberation from noble administration. These institutions were designed to incorporate the liberated peasants into the political arena of the empire by creating independent provincial bodies of administration where territorial representatives, elected by the local population, would decide on their own about issues affecting their localities. The move towards the creation of self-government institutions was significant in many respects, as it underlined that *soslovie* distinctions gave way to

²⁰ Roxanne Easley, *The Emancipation of the Serfs in Russia: Peace Arbitrators and the Development of Civil Society* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Evsey D. Domar and Mark J. Machina, 'On the Profitability of Russian Serfdom', *The Journal of Economic History*, 44.4 (1984), 919–55; David Moon, 'Reassessing Russian Serfdom', *European History Quarterly*, 26.4 (1996), 483–526.

²¹ W. Bruce Lincoln, *The Great Reforms: Autocracy, Bureaucracy, and the Politics of Change in Imperial Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1990), p. 30.

²² *Ibid.*

territorial and socioeconomic – and therefore, class – criteria for dealing with imperial subjects, eroding the traditional estate-based system for categorising the empire’s population.²³ It was a critical move towards decentralising policy-making throughout the empire and for the ‘political education of a country in which the majority of the population had only recently been emancipated from serfdom’.²⁴ These provincial bodies of self-government were to be complemented down the ladder of territorial hierarchies, with the creation of district-level *zemstva* which functioned in the same way as their upper provincial equivalents but on a lower scale, creating an elective chain of locals’ self-government consisting of imperial subjects who were now given room to decide on local issues for themselves.

However, there were some considerations that needed to be made in order to assess the real significance and revolutionary scope of this reform. Many publicists at the time of the promulgation of *zemstva* characterised it as a conservative reform. In their view, the creation of an all-state system had the potential to be revolutionary, as for the first time the Russian state proposed a form of local government in which its population ceased to be divided between *sosloviia*, symbolically beginning the erasure of differentiated privileges among social estates. However, the elective rules in the conformation of these bodies of self-government were decided on property qualifications that effectively put the nobility at the head of each *zemstvo*, giving them an overrepresentation in these new self-government bodies in comparison with peasants and urban dwellers. Mikhail Nikiforovich Katkov, the conservative editor of the *Moskovskie vedomosti*, published a short piece in his newspaper in the year leading up to the reform in which he polemised with a news outlet, the *Severnaia pochta* (Northern Post), which criticised the direction that discussions about the eligibility criteria of representatives in the *zemstva* was taking. According to Katkov, in *Severnaia pochta*’s opinion, the all-*soslovie* character of these institutions was being neglected to transform *zemstva* into nobles’ assemblies: ‘the necessity of an artificial determination of the number of representatives in a county assembly to be chosen by each of these state elective assemblies, means that these elected members would necessarily consider themselves not

²³ See Alison K. Smith, *For the Common Good and Their Own Well-Being: Social Estates in Imperial Russia* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). However, the *sosloviia* system was not completely erased as aspects of it were kept and, in some cases, reinforced by the reforms. Keeping peasants under a differentiated court system at *volost*’ level was part of the endurance of *soslovie* distinctions, while the rules for electing the three different curiae in *zemstvo* administration were considered responsible for strengthening estate privileges. See Steven Nafziger, ‘Did Ivan’s Vote Matter? The Political Economy of Local Democracy in Tsarist Russia’, *European Review of Economic History*, 15.3 (2011), 393–441.

²⁴ Petrov, ‘Crowning the Edifice’, p. 198.

representatives of the *zemstva*, but of their separate class,²⁵ implying that territorial interests would be overlooked in favour of the gentry's benefit, who would speak for the whole territory, eliminating the institutions' all-state nature.

Zemstva have been regarded by historians as a consequence of the central government's attempt to rationalise the disorganised imperial administration, while also hoping to 'deflect a wave of discontent among the nobility, who had virtually been deprived of power in the provinces after the emancipation'.²⁶ S. Frederick Starr has argued that the new institutions did not constitute a radically different way of understanding the structure of the empire, and that they should be seen as the continuation of the power of the nobility over the peasant population, disguised in new administrative garments as the 'reforms show greater continuity than has generally been acknowledged'.²⁷ This is the perspective taken by Yanni Kotsonis to understand such measures. In his view, the creation of self-government institutions, alongside other policies, aimed at eliminating traditional corporate intermediaries between the state and imperial subjects. *Sosloviia* organisations and peasant communes were to disappear in order to increase the state's intimate knowledge of its subjects, and thereby to better allocate duties, as was the trend in the rest of Europe at the time.²⁸

This appraisal of the real significance of the *zemstva* in Russia suggests that there was no clear ideological framework undergirding its design. In the discussions leading up to the formation of these self-government institutions there was no explicit indication of the model upon which the *zemstva* would be based, and foreign and domestic examples – without assessing their compatibility or applicability in the Russian context – were being considered as possible courses of action. As John Corcoran points out, '*zemtsy* were quite happy to pull from whichever pile of ideas seemed most suitable and showed little concern for the need to develop an overarching ideology for their actions'.²⁹ Leaving the whole structure of the *zemstva* in a vague state was considered to have potential benefits for the noble element in the localities, as opening the legislation to interpretation would give the 'natural' leaders of the *zemstva* an opportunity to interpret rules in a way favourable to their interests. As the steadfast conservative and defender of autocracy Mikhail Katkov put it: 'That is why correct reforms come from living reality, and not

²⁵ Mikhail Nikiforovich Katkov, *Sobranie peredovykh statei Moskovskikh vedomostei 1863 god* (Moscow: Izdanie S. P. Katkovoï, 1897), p. 173. Originally published in Moscow on April 16th, 1863.

²⁶ Volvenko, 'The Zemstvo Reform', p. 348.

²⁷ Starr, 'Local Initiative in Russia before the Zemstvo', p. 6.

²⁸ Yanni Kotsonis, "'Face-to-Face": The State, the Individual, and the Citizen in Russian Taxation, 1863–1917', *Slavic Review*, 63.2 (2004), 221–46.

²⁹ John Corcoran, 'Mandates from Above and Models from Abroad: Western Ideas and the Shaping of Zemstvo Policy, 1865–1868', *Russian History*, 41.2 (2014), 226–40 (p. 240).

from abstract theories, and that is why living reality looks so incredulously at reformers that do not recognise them'.³⁰ By putting forward his rejection of abstract principles, Katkov was arguing for having greater leverage and manoeuvring in local self-administration when exceptional situations arose.

Despite the nobility's privileged position within these institutions, *zemstva* did allow for a political mobilisation that was hitherto inexistent in the Russian imperial context. As bodies of self-government, these institutions were part of the expansion of state activities through the provision of funding for communities to decide how and where to distribute resources. The limited amount of funds that the state had previously granted towards provincial upkeep, and which had formerly remained under the authority and supervision of the land-owning nobility, was now enlarged as the result of the organisation of these self-administration institutions in the European provinces of the empire.³¹ As such, *zemstva* possessed an organisation that was comprised of two main bodies: the assembly, that met once or twice a year to elect local representatives from amongst themselves, and an executive board that was in charge of day-to-day activities and set the topics to be discussed in the assemblies. Assemblies were structured around three types of members: rural landowners, urban property owners and communal peasant villages.³² As discussed above, the elective procedures ensured that the nobility, the first curiae of assembly members, had the majority and control of *zemstva* affairs, a legacy of *sosloviia* logic that thwarted the accurate representation of locals' concerns. At the same time, there were external limitations to *zemstva* autonomy as provincial governors and ministerial agencies could still veto the decisions taken within them.³³

Despite these limitations, the *zemstva* represented an institutional novelty as they established formal procedures and systematised the organisation of local governance, a hitherto inexistent arrangement. These institutions had a number of new responsibilities, such as supporting local economic development through the creation of cooperatives and credit organisations, the expansion and upkeep of educational and healthcare institutions – which were the main expenditure items for *zemstva*³⁴ – managing *zemstva* finances, providing grain stores to secure food supplies, repairing local roads, protecting crops and caring for livestock welfare and organising local elections. Overseeing these various

³⁰ Katkov, *Sobranie*, pp. 332–33. Originally published in Moscow on June 24th, 1863.

³¹ See Shand P. Shakibi, 'Central Government', in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, ed. by Dominic Lieven (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), II, 429–48.

³² Nafziger, 'Did Ivan's Vote Matter?', p. 394.

³³ Janet Hartley, 'Provincial and Local Government', in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, ed. by Dominic Lieven (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), II, 449–67 (p. 453).

³⁴ Tracy Dennison and Steven Nafziger, 'Living Standards in Nineteenth-Century Russia', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 43.3 (2012), 397–441 (pp. 418–20).

aspects of local life required a body of professionals to keep the system running. The nobility was the most educated section of society to take up these responsibilities, but there were not nearly enough of them in the empire to occupy these positions. Therefore, the opening of these self-government bodies allowed for the development of a section of society who found in the *zemstva* a way of including themselves within the political structure of the empire. The participation of these professionals points towards ‘a clear commitment on the part of Russia's "middle" groups to civic activity and the regeneration of Russian social and political life’.³⁵ Yet although female participation in public life was already being discussed among the educated public – as was brought to attention by the publicist Nikolaï G. Chernyshevskiï in his novel *What Is to Be Done?* (1863) – women were barred from participation in these organs as territorial representatives.

It is among this group of professionals and *zemstvo* officials, then, that it is possible to find the most revolutionary aspect of the development of these institutions in European Russia, as the involvement of the middle classes set in motion a political movement that went beyond the scope of local government. As Petrov has argued, the activities of these institutions exceeded their original goals as they turned into a structure that could be the basis of ‘nationwide forms of self-government, parliamentary forms in particular’.³⁶ The body of people working in the *zemstva* increased in number and significance towards the end of the 19th century and by the beginning of the 20th century it employed around 70,000 specialists in different areas. This group of people understood their role as ‘public service as opposed to those who were in the tsarist civil service’.³⁷ Therefore, it was in the framework of the *zemstva* that political opposition to autocracy, the *zemstvo* liberal movement, originated.

At this point it is worth recalling that initially the reform came into existence as a way of filling an administrative gap created by the liberation of the serfs. In this sense, from its inception, the administrative measures put in place to create the *zemstva* were thought to be the instruments that would regulate the relationship between the majority of the population and the traditional social base of autocracy, who were given privileges in the arrangement of how these relations would play out under the frame of *zemstva*. However, more than being bodies that affected the relationship between serf-owner and peasant, these institutions enabled the development of a group of people in between, a hitherto politically marginalised group who found within self-government institutions a

³⁵ Porter and Gleason, ‘The Zemstvo and the Transformation of Russian Society’, p. 60.

³⁶ Petrov, ‘Crowning the Edifice’, p. 202.

³⁷ Porter and Gleason, ‘The Zemstvo and the Transformation of Russian Society’, p. 64.

way to inject a dynamism into the political landscape of the empire that was new both in scale and nature.

The influential role these institutions played in the empire must, however, be tempered by exploration of the limits of the *zemstvo* reform, as they were not applied throughout the empire in the same way or at the same time. In 1865, a year after the promulgation of these new administrative structures, *zemstva* started to be opened but were limited to only eighteen provinces ‘compactly clustered in the heartland of European Russia’.³⁸ The process lasted for fifteen years ‘until a total of thirty-four was reached’³⁹ within the European core of Russia as it is shown in Figure 1. The Baltic provinces, Poland, Belorussia, Astrakhan, Arkhangel’sk, right-bank Ukraine,⁴⁰ the Caucasus, Central Asia, Siberia and the Far East were effectively left out of the reach of the *zemstva* during the first wave of expansion.

There were different reasons for leaving these regions beyond the *zemstvo*’s scope, but at least initially, the central government was willing to look into the introduction of these institutions in ‘all those parts of the empire “governed by special institutions.”’⁴¹ However, there were no new *zemstva* until the very eve of World War I when they reached ‘43 of the 84 provinces and regions of the empire’,⁴² adding Ukrainian provinces as well as Astrakhan, Orenburg and Stavropol, as it is possible to see in the 1906–1916 wave of expansion in Figure 1. The only territory where these institutions were introduced but later removed was the Don *oblast*’, as can be seen in the period between 1875 and 1882.⁴³

³⁸ McKenzie, ‘Zemstvo Organization’, p. 33.

³⁹ S. Frederick Starr, *Decentralization and Self-Government in Russia, 1830–1870* (Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 294.

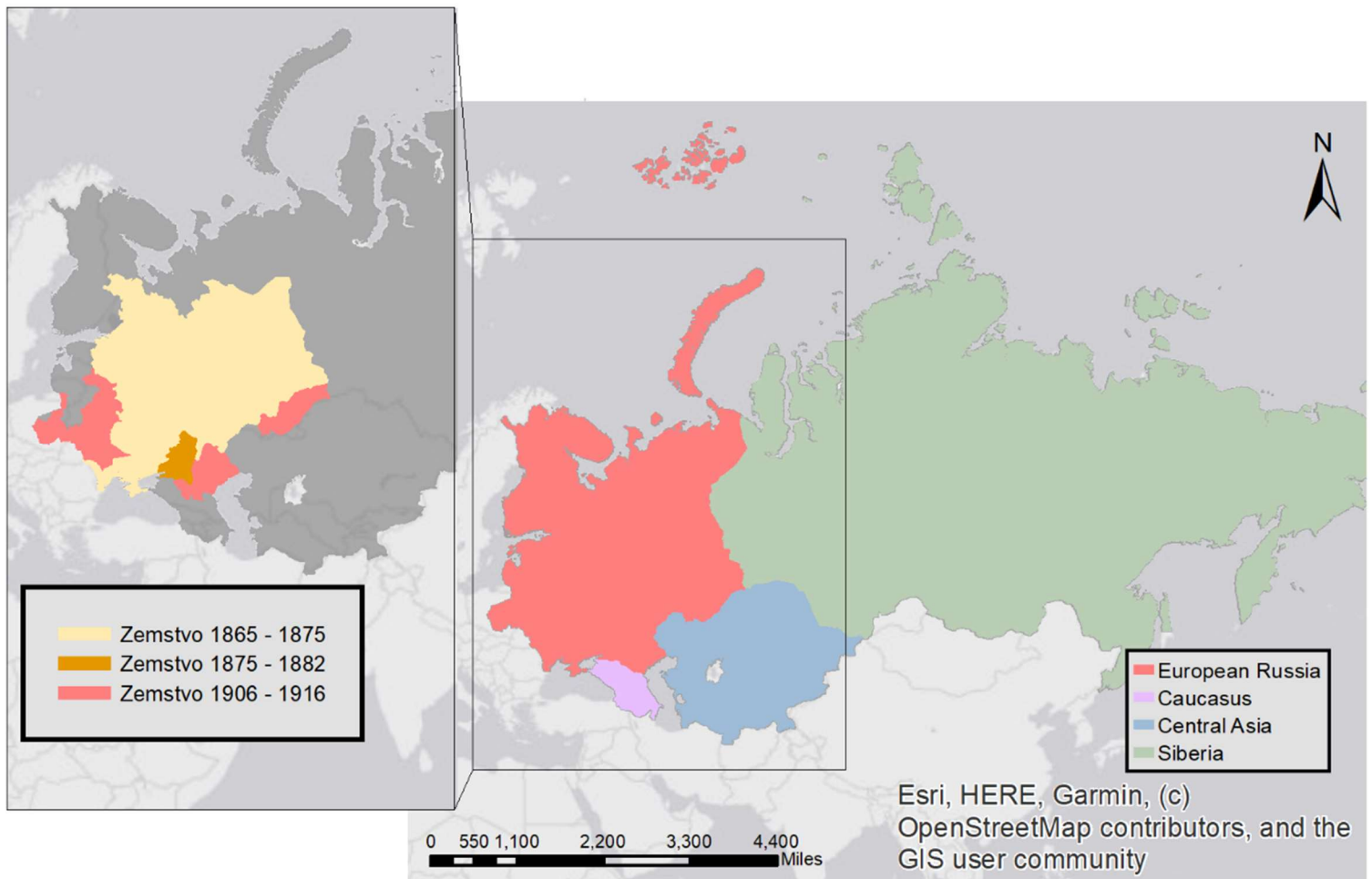
⁴⁰ That refers to the section of modern-day Ukraine that was incorporated later (1793) into the Russian empire, and therefore had less of a cultural identification with the Russian dynasty and state.

⁴¹ McKenzie, ‘Zemstvo Organization’, p. 33. See footnote 45.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁴³ See Volvenko, ‘The Zemstvo Reform’.

Figure 1: *Zemstva's Territorial Expansion through Time and the Russian empire's general territorial division*⁴⁴



Government's initial aspiration to apply these measures in the areas 'governed by special institutions' can be explained in many ways.⁴⁵ Certainly, the bureaucratic process of setting up *zemstva* in different provinces strained an already overburdened bureaucratic system, 'since considerable preliminary work by commissions of local administrators had to be undertaken before a *zemstvo* could open'.⁴⁶ This was also the case for Siberia. As explained above, the reform was designed within the larger imperial administrative

⁴⁴ Maps throughout this dissertation were created using ArcGIS® software by Esri. ArcGIS® and ArcMap™ are the intellectual property of Esri and are used herein under license. Copyright © Esri. All rights reserved. For more information about Esri® software, please visit www.esri.com. The dataset used to create this map was developed by Ivan Sablin and others, 'Transcultural Empire: Geographic Information System of the 1897 and 1926 General Censuses in the Russian Empire and Soviet Union' (heiDATA, 2018) <<https://heidata.uni-heidelberg.de/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.11588/data/10064>> [accessed 20 November 2020].

⁴⁵ It was a common feature of Imperial Russia in the latter part of the nineteenth century name their colonial domains as territories under special administration. From the metropolis' perspective, avoiding the colonial tag could prevent independentist movements. In practice, territories governed by 'special institutions' were territories governed by military authorities or regions that enjoyed high degrees of autonomy, as the Baltic provinces did.

⁴⁶ Starr, *Decentralization and Self-Government in Russia, 1830–1870*, p. 294.

overhaul after the serfs' emancipation, which addressed the relationship between the serf-owning nobility and the newly liberated serfs. Therefore, leaving Siberia out of this reform made perfect sense as there were hardly any serfs in Siberia, nor serf-owners, that needed regulation by *zemstva*. This was the justification that the Minister of Internal Affairs at the time, Sergeĭ S. Lanskoĭ, used 'as serfdom in Siberia is an institution that has been grafted to this land in a later time and is completely alien to the general character of the historical development of Siberia's civil life'⁴⁷.

However, in 1890 a Siberian journalist saw the absence of a landed gentry in Siberia as facilitating the implementation of *zemstva* in Siberia as 'there is no antagonism between peasants and other groups of the population, owing to the absolute absence of the latter [landed gentry]'.⁴⁸ The journalist argued that the establishment of organs of self-government would be freed from the obstacles that European Russians had to overcome in the process. In Siberians' opinion, the debates about elective rules and curiae representation could be avoided in their region, easing the implementation process which strengthened their case for *zemstva*'s adoption in Siberia.

Yet, for the central government there was the additional problem of whom to entrust these institutions to. As discussed above, in the European section of the empire, where all the *zemstva* were applied, the nobility held the leading positions. Siberia lacked this *soslovie* and, furthermore, Siberia was considered a land without an educated society to rely upon in the absence of nobility.⁴⁹ From its conquest in the sixteenth century onwards there was always a sense that Siberia's population was not sufficiently developed – whether in numbers or in enlightenment – to be trusted with the administration of the region. An example of this opinion can be found in an essay written by the Siberian publicist Grigorĭ Ivanovich Zhernovkov, a *popovich* who worked in the cadres of Siberia's imperial administration while also taking part in the regionalist movement from his home town in Novo-Nikolaevsk (modern day Novosibirsk). He provides an analysis of Siberia's relationship with the central government when analysing Mikhail M. Speranskiĭ's time in Siberia,⁵⁰ at the beginning of the 19th century:

⁴⁷ Quoted in Alt'shuller, '*Zemstvo v Sibiri*', p. 28.

⁴⁸ 'Sovremennoe sostoiiane i zhelatel'nyia izmeneniia i volostnogo suda v Sibiri', *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, May 13th, 1890, p. 7.

⁴⁹ This was the same reason used to prevent *zemstva* implementation in Arkhangel'sk were it only was introduced after the February Revolution in 1917. See Pavel V. Fedorov, *Zemstva i sovety Arkhangel'skoĭ gubernii v 1917–1920 gg.* (Murmansk: Murmanskĭ gosudarstvennyĭ pedagogicheskiĭ universitet, 2001).

⁵⁰ Speranskiĭ was Russian statesman appointed Governor-general of Siberia in 1819 to craft new legislation that could put in order the empire's exile system, while also addressing locals' grievances about abusive administrators. Speranskiĭ's mission culminated in the reforms of 1822. See Raeff, *Siberia and the Reforms of 1822*.

Speranskiĭ clearly understood that any social reform can only be fruitful with the active, creative work of the population, only with joint organised efforts of the entire interested society, the absence of which was felt by the reformer in Siberia. The region, at the time of Speranskiĭ, did not yet have any society, and it could not yet be created in the atmosphere of Asiatic despotism under which it lived.⁵¹

The lack of educated people is understood by Zhernovkov as the result of the abusive government structures existing in the region that did not allow for any social development, a reason that fitted well with the author's Siberian allegiances. However, other perspectives offered alternative explanations, which did not necessarily disagree with Zhernovkov. In an essay celebrating the announcement of the opening of the first Siberian university, the metropolitan and liberal journal *Vestnik Evropy* (Herald of Europe) published an essay recounting the development of education in the region, in which they also remembered the time of Speranskiĭ and his evaluation of the Siberian population: 'As the most educated man of his time, Speranskiĭ could not help but be struck by the ignorance of the Siberian population'.⁵² The article explains this situation by saying that there was:

A constant ebb of the young generations from Siberia to European Russia, where all the means to get an education were available, and this part of the Siberian population was lost forever to Siberia. Largely caused by having grown used to the comforts of life, only a few people who went away decided to return to that region, depriving it of the most natural and reliable element for occupying positions in the local administration.⁵³

The introduction of these self-government organs was therefore unthinkable for metropolitan authorities in a place where there was no population deemed sufficiently trained to take up the responsibilities of provincial administration. This idea has been developed by Nafziger's analysis of *zemstva* institutions. He states that their exclusion from several regions was the result of the central government's concern that the absence of a Russian Orthodox elite would mean that the *zemstva* institutions would be led by non-Russians who could undermine their allegiance to the central government.⁵⁴ Moreover, metropolitan authorities feared regionalists' aspirations to further autonomy,

⁵¹ Grigorii Ivanovich Zhernovkov, *Sibir' i pravitel'stvo* (Novo-Nikolaevsk: Izdanie N. P. Litvinova, 1907), p. 18.

⁵² *Vestnik Evropy, zhurnal istorii, politiki, literatury*, chetyrnadtsatyĭ god (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia M. M. Stasiulevicha, 1879), IV, p. 61.

⁵³ *Vestnik Evropy*, IV, p. 64.

⁵⁴ Nafziger, 'Did Ivan's Vote Matter?', p. 397.

a sentiment that erupted precisely during the 1860s, thus adding another brick in the wall forbidding the *zemstva*'s expansion towards Siberia. The untrustworthiness of Siberians in the eyes of European Russians was heightened to the extent that a well-known, but unnamed, metropolitan official serving in the western Siberian Governor-generalship during the 1860s was quoted in *Vestnik Evropy* declaring that 'it is dangerous for Siberians to have a university degree, officials called in from European Russia can be much more reliable here'.⁵⁵

All these reasons help to explain the initial failure of *zemstva*'s expansion into Siberia during its first years of existence. However, as time passed, these institutions changed and so did the government's assessment of them. The political landscape of the empire began to take a new shape and the *zemstva*'s trajectory in Russia followed a course that demanded different responses from government and society. The next section discusses how these institutions of self-government progressed during the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century in European Russia, seeking to analyse in more detail their significance in the development of the empire's social structure.

Zemstva and their Development in European Russia: from Inception to Demise

These institutions were dynamic entities, where sections of society that had not shared a common space previously began dialogues with one another, creating unexpected outcomes as a result. This section looks at the *zemstva*'s trajectory, seeking to understand the role they played in the Russian empire, and their effect on the development of the social structure in European Russia. To this end I first present the context into which these institutions of self-government were thrown: the provincial administrative structure.

Imperial Russia's provincial administrative landscape – the province being the main territorial unit into which the empire was divided during the period under study – was a complicated affair, as it was populated by many organisations and institutions, woven together by changing relations which could mean competition and/or collaboration with each other, addressing different issues of local and state concern. One way of navigating through this complicated web of organisations is to distinguish them by origin, by the initiating agent in the creation of these structures. Accordingly, it is possible to

⁵⁵ *Vestnik Evropy*, IV, p. 68.

differentiate two broad groups in the local realm: governmental or bureaucratic institutions, and societal or public organisations.

The first of these refers to the government agencies put in place to deal with the administration of the empire, structures that came ultimately into being by the will of the autocrat. In Russia's provincial administrative system this referred to the main bureaucratic structure which had the governor at its head, who was appointed by the emperor and ruled with the aid of a Provincial Board (*gubernskoe pravlenie*) of the main local bureaucrats, and a hierarchy of officials that maintained the link between the monarch and the tsar's provinces.⁵⁶ From the setting-up of ministries in 1802 we can also find ministerial representatives in the provinces as part of these territorial sections' bureaucratic organisations. These authorities enjoyed the same civil service rank as provincial governors and were charged with inspecting the correct functioning of government agencies spread throughout a region.⁵⁷

The vague boundaries between governors' authority and the ministerial range of action created conflictive relations among these central and local bureaucratic structures. Conflict also developed as a result of infighting between different ministries and cliques within the metropolitan court. Especially in European Russia, the struggle for pre-eminence in the State Council – between the Internal Affairs ministry (hereafter MVD) and the Judicial ministry for example – reverberated in provincial administration.⁵⁸ Another particularity of this group was that 'state officialdom in Russia has, almost without exception, always been just that – the servant of the state, not of citizenry or the public. In Russia, neither legislation nor state organisations of the highest levels have ever enjoined officials, either formally or informally, to serve the public'.⁵⁹

The second group of institutions found in the provincial realm were the societal or public types, which refer to organisations created by and consisting of private individuals who grouped around common features or interests. These groups' existence was sanctioned by the state, a right given to certain groups to organise themselves to defend or develop their common interests. Among these organisations it was possible to find *soslovie* structures – such as noble assemblies, urban-dwellers associations, ecclesiastical institutions and rural communities – as well as masonic lodges, statistical bodies and scientific organisations. In general terms, these organisations were formed to

⁵⁶ A function that the emperor gradually left to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

⁵⁷ See LeDonne, 'Administrative Regionalization'.

⁵⁸ See Daniel T. Orlovsky, 'Recent Studies on the Russian Bureaucracy', *Russian Review*, 35.4 (1976), 448.

⁵⁹ *Russian Bureaucracy and the State: Officialdom from Alexander III to Vladimir Putin*, ed. by Don Karl Rowney and Eugene Huskey (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 6; See also Karl W. Ryavec, *Russian Bureaucracy: Power and Pathology* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003).

represent and make decisions regarding the group's courses of action, being therefore at the service of said group. However underdeveloped this public realm was in Russia – a historiographical discussion found within the 'declensionist' historiography of imperial Russia⁶⁰ – their numbers grew increasingly during the second half of the 19th century, becoming a factor that 'caused and reflected fast-paced social, economic and cultural changes' occurring during this period.⁶¹ As Kazakova-Apkarikova has shown in her study of provincial voluntary associations, they were not only limited to the big urban centres of the European section of the empire, as they were also numerically relevant in provinces outside the imperial core and in smaller cities.⁶²

Within this context of administrative structures, the *zemstva* appeared as a public institution that, given its wide and encompassing conformation, represented a novelty in the provincial panorama. Their all-estate composition, which resonated with the *zemskii sobor* of the old days, managed to bring together a wider community than was usual for public organisations in the provincial contexts. It was a territorial unit that managed to be, with all its imperfections, the catalyst of a broader self-understanding of society as its activities and decisions went beyond the limits of the already existing public associations. In the words of the *zemstvo* activist Ivan Petrovich Belokonskii:

Despite all the shortcomings of the *zemstvo* regulations of 1864, built, among other things, on high property qualifications, it provided the opportunity to gradually lead the way not only to true local self-government, but also to the attempt, by the combined forces of *zemstva*, to achieve national representation in state affairs.⁶³

The emergence of the *zemstva*, with their all-*soslovie* nature, created an organisation with a social base wide enough to allow the development of a parallel structure to that of the bureaucratic management of governors. Within the framework of the *zemstva* it was possible to address many local problems, without having to resort to a bureaucratic apparatus widely regarded as inefficient and self-serving. Many of the functions allocated to bureaucratic administration were transferred to the *zemstvo*,

⁶⁰ See Bradley, 'Subjects into Citizens', p. 1105. The concept 'declensionist' he uses in this article refers to the tendency in the historiography of imperial Russia to look for the signs that led to the empire's decline and fall, rather than studying its realities on their own terms and worth.

⁶¹ Joseph Bradley, *Voluntary Associations in Tsarist Russia: Science, Patriotism, and Civil Society* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 1.

⁶² See Elena Iu. Kazakova-Apkarimova, 'Gorozhane i obshchestvennye organizatsii na Urale vo vtoroi polovine XIX – nachale XX v.: grazhdane ili "striutskie"?' , *Ural'skii istoricheskii vestnik*, 1.38 (2013), 40–45.

⁶³ Ivan Petrovich Belokonskii, *Zemskoe dvizhenie* (Moscow: Tipografia G. Lissnera i D. Sobko, 1914), p. 2.

transforming it in the most relevant public institution within the provinces of European Russia during the second half of the 19th century.

Nevertheless, this importance was not regarded passively by the bureaucratic administration. Metropolitan authorities, governors and bureaucratic officials in charge of provincial administrations viewed *zemstva* activities with growing suspicion, as they began to nurture demands that exceeded the range of action that they were permitted. From their inception, the MVD minister P. A. Valuev asserted that *zemstva* were:

Only a special organ of one and the same state power and from it [that state power, the *zemstva*] receives its rights and authority; the *zemstva* institutions, having their place in the state organism, are not able to exist outside of it.⁶⁴

The minister's obstinate intention to keep these self-government institutions in their place within the administration was designed to avoid their transformation into political organs that could dispute the authority of the state. It was also a reminder of their activities' territorial limits, a caution taken to prevent all lateral contacts between *zemstva* that could foster political demands on a bigger scale than their permitted local scope.

The social spaces being reclaimed by the *zemstva* nurtured a conflictive relationship with the bureaucracy, a fact that began to make itself evident from the very start of their implementation in European Russia. For Aleksandr I. Koshelev, a Slavophile of noble origin who held many positions in the high bureaucracy, this manifested itself from the beginning: 'Yes! if, even then [in 1868], the administration opposed the *zemstvo* institutions, then it allowed itself to do so intermittently and slyly, but now [in 1882] it acts openly and as if in fulfilment of official duty'.⁶⁵ His comments about the initial caution with which the government opposed *zemstva* are related to the first great episode of confrontation between these self-government institutions and the state. In 1865:

The government started the war against *zemstva* [...] The affair started in Petersburg provincial assembly, which in December of 1865 unanimously decided to apply for the establishment of a central *zemstva* agency for the administration of state duties, with the goal that in 1867 *zemstva* could participate in legislative work. In response, the government closed the *zemstvo* Establishment of the St. Petersburg Province, sent the chairman of the St. Petersburg Provincial *zemstvo* Council N. F. Kruse to

⁶⁴ Quoted in Starr, 'Local Initiative in Russia before the Zemstvo', p. 65.

⁶⁵ Koshelev, Aleksandr Ivanovich, *Zapiski Aleksandra Ivanovicha Kosheleva (1812–1883 gody)* (Berlin: B. Behr's Verlag, 1884), p. 196.

Orenburg, retired a public speaker, senator M. N. Liuboshchinskoe, and a member of the *zemstvo*, Count A. P. Shuvalov, was forced to go abroad.⁶⁶

This first round of hostilities between *zemstva* and bureaucracy heralded a period of intermittent cooperation and confrontation that developed throughout the rest of the 19th century and into the 20th century. Central government constantly tried to curb the activities of self-government institutions and, on the occasions *zemstva* attempted to expand their reach, they faced immediate opposition from the government.⁶⁷ Therefore, *zemstva* officials developed a clear distinction between what they understood as state affairs, and the issues of social interest which they considered to be their responsibility, demanding ‘a devolution of governing authority and the removal of the prohibition on inter-*zemstvo* contacts’⁶⁸. Even in times of difficulty, as during the spread of cholera or other epidemics in which the horizontal communication of *zemstva* to coordinate preventative measures was requested, permission was only reluctantly given or outrightly rejected.⁶⁹

It should be noted that government’s suspicions about the seditious character of these organisations were born out of a bureaucratic fear of being replaced by a growing public administration. The bureaucracy’s original intention was to create *zemstva* as a first step towards solving their ‘penetration’⁷⁰ problem, that is, asserting themselves down the ladder of provincial administration and eliminating barriers between individuals and the state.⁷¹ As such, these institutions were originally planned as an initial stage of bureaucratic advance towards greater provincial control, rather than thinking of them as political schools that would progressively gain more autonomy. However, ‘after 1864 the same sense of insecurity in the part of provincial officialdom was directed towards the *zemstvos* [as they feared] that the estate-based elective system would seek to replicate itself upwards, culminating in a national *zemstvo*’.⁷²

Those fears were not unfounded. As the events in St. Petersburg announced, there was a political inclination among *zemtsy* to associate on a wider scale, trespassing their circumscribed provincial range. As Belokonskiĭ described:

⁶⁶ Belokonskiĭ, *Zemskoe dvizhenie*, pp. 2–3.

⁶⁷ See Petrov, ‘Crowning the Edifice’, p. 200.

⁶⁸ Porter and Gleason, ‘The Zemstvo and the Transformation of Russian Society’, p. 64.

⁶⁹ See Petrov, ‘Crowning the Edifice’, p. 208.

⁷⁰ See Thomas S. Pearson, *Russian Officialdom in Crisis: Autocracy and Local Self-Government, 1861–1900* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. xv. See also Kotsonis, “‘Face-to-Face’”.

⁷¹ See Eric Lohr, ‘The Ideal Citizen and Real Subject in Late Imperial Russia’, *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 7.2 (2006), 173–94.

⁷² Starr, ‘Local Initiative in Russia before the Zemstvo’, p. 25.

In 1872, the Vladimir Provincial *Zemstvo* Assembly decided to apply for permission to hold an All-Russian *Zemstvo* Congress. Of course, it received a categorical refusal. Then the other *zemstvos*, disguising their intentions, began to petition for regional congresses, with the participation of the ‘third element’, to resolve various issues: insurance, public education, medicine, etc. And these conventions were allowed. However, it was necessary to look for other ways, and *zemstsy* began to organise private *zemstvo* congresses, illegal, so to speak.⁷³

The public sphere of activities developed within the *zemstva* created a ‘framework of political action’⁷⁴ in which policy could be discussed and imagined on an empire-wide level. As discussed by Roberta Thompson Manning, government officials in the centre and in the provinces, in a bid to protect what had been their monopolistic authority in the provincial realm, instinctively sought to limit the range of activities and autonomy of *zemstva* officials, ‘thus exacerbating the inherent antagonism between the *zemstvos* and government and prompting the *zemstvo* to engage ever more earnestly in oppositional activities’.⁷⁵

As the relationship between government and *zemstva* was becoming ever more tense as the century progressed, political events in the empire came to shake the precarious balance upon which the bureaucratic and public structures stood. Consecutive failed attempts to assassinate Alexander II (in 1866, 1879 and 1880) – and different successful and unsuccessful attempts on the lives of other bureaucratic authorities – came to a head when in 1881 the *Narodnaia volia* group made a definitive move on the emperor’s life. His death was, for the government, the final proof of the need to effect changes and control the hubs of political activity, which included how self-government was being managed in the empire, intensifying bureaucratic pressure to stem political activity in society, and therefore affecting the position of *zemstva* in European Russia. The reign of Alexander III saw the development of different conservative measures – or counter-reforms – designed to reduce the available spaces of public debate, measures which came to fruition in 1890.

The promulgation of the 1890 statute marked the high point of the conflict between the state’s bureaucracy and the public administration. This reform has been analysed in historiography as a return, or further consolidation, of the noble element in

⁷³ Belokonskiĭ, *Zemskoe dvizhenie*, p. 4.

⁷⁴ Josh Sanborn, ‘The Mobilization of 1914 and the Question of the Russian Nation: A Re-examination’, *Slavic Review*, 59.2 (2000), 267–89 (p. 282).

⁷⁵ Thompson Manning, ‘The *Zemstvo* and Politics’, p. 135.

public administration, who were regarded by the autocracy as the most reliable social force that could halt radicalisation. It has been seen as the reaction of Alexander III, who expanded the authority of the nobility to quell the political effervescence that was taking Russia down what he saw as a politically undesirable path. As part of that drive, these measures eliminated the all-class nature of *zemstva* and decreased peasants' elective rights. As Porter and Gleason have argued, 'the new law was designed to once again make the nobility into a bulwark for the regime and to freeze the socio-political evolution'.⁷⁶

Other historiographic strands have regarded this reform as the final victory of the bureaucratic element, the installation of the statist theory over societal self-government desires.⁷⁷ In this perspective, the role of nobility is considered differently, as their preeminent role in *zemstva* was secured by the legislation of 1864. However, as Vladimir Kulikov has noted, *zemstva* nurtured a political movement that was considered dangerous by the government, who realised that the nobility had failed as society's natural leaders. For that reason, metropolitan officials concluded that nobles could not be trusted to wield provincial authority.⁷⁸

In this sense, the changes introduced to *zemstva* institutions in 1890 were an expansion of the bureaucracy's oversight over the public administration represented by the *zemstvo*. Even the introduction of land captains (*zemskie nachal'niki*), administrative figures who were given extensive administrative and judicial powers over the peasantry to oversee their local administration, has been pictured by Corinne Gaudin and Thomas Pearson not as a noble reaction but as an answer to government's diagnosis of rural affairs.⁷⁹ In his interpretation, it was the interest of the bureaucratic element that 'prompted the government to introduce the counter-reforms in general and the land captains in particular'.⁸⁰

Whichever interpretation we adhere to, the fact remains that during the period of the Great Reforms, political activism among the middle classes became more frequent,

⁷⁶ Porter and Gleason, 'The Zemstvo and the Transformation of Russian Society', p. 68. See Abbott Gleason, 'The Great Reforms and the Historians since Stalin', in *Russia's Great Reforms, 1855–1881* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 1–16, for a wider view of the interpretations given to these reforms.

⁷⁷ See Vladimir V. Kulikov, 'Local Self-Government and Administrative Oversight: The Historical Experience of the Zemstvo', *Russian Studies in History*, 53.3 (2014), 56–69. Kulikov sets out to explain the conflict between bureaucracy and self-government as part of a wider struggle between the societal and statist theories of government developed in the nineteenth century.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁷⁹ See Corinne Gaudin, "'No Place to Lay My Head": Marginalization and the Right to Land during the Stolypin Reforms', *Slavic Review*, 57.4 (1998), 747–73; Corinne Gaudin, *Ruling Peasants: Village and State in Late Imperial Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007).

⁸⁰ Thomas S. Pearson, 'The Origins of Alexander III's Land Captains: A Reinterpretation', *Slavic Review*, 40.3 (1981), 384–403 (p. 385).

as the *intelligentsiia* appropriated the political space within the reformed structure of the empire. Being a political force that was committed to the destiny of the masses as well as ensuring growing spaces of representation, these professionals and their use of the public structures for making policy and staking political claims can be regarded as one of the most important outcomes of self-government institutions in Russia. After the promulgation of the Great Reforms, university statutes were transformed, and the mainly military-based learning institutions existing before the 1860s were opened to the rest of society, a change that affected the educated provincial public who had no opportunity to attain a higher degree, as was the case with Siberia before the opening of Tomsk university in 1888. ‘The norm of public higher education for professional specialists was clearly established in the 1860s’⁸¹ and although their numeric weight only developed fully to the end of the 19th century, this group’s influence was helped by the establishment of *zemstva* at provincial and district levels. In Charles Timberlake’s view, the great number of specialists that were thrust into provincial cities to occupy the hitherto inexistent positions now available through *zemstva* nurtured ‘a socioeconomic stratum of professionals’.⁸²

Although the *intelligentsiia*’s political activism in rural contexts had less influence, as the ‘Going to the People’ movement attests, their idealistic vision of society promoted in them a newly born political engagement.⁸³ The liberal journalist for *Vestnik Evropy*, N. P. Koliupanov, described them in an 1867 article in the following terms:

From all ends, people who wanted to participate in social activities were pulled into the *zemstvo*; they bore with them their strength, their boredom after long idleness, and demanded work; they were full of hope that the principles of local self-government would cling to society and bring abundant fruits.⁸⁴

In Koliupanov’s opinion, their diverse social backgrounds, their popular service ethos and their enthusiasm gave these professionals their characteristic importance in the context of self-government institutions.

⁸¹ Balzer, *Russia’s Missing Middle Class*, p. 11.

⁸² Timberlake, ‘The Zemstvo and the Development of a Russian Middle Class’, p. 164.

⁸³ A socialist group that wished to perform social change from their involvement with the urban workers and the peasantry ‘to stir up popular resentment at the shortage of land available to the peasants or at the heavy burden of taxation which they bore, or to teach them revolutionary songs’. Derek Offord, *Nineteenth-Century Russia: Opposition to Autocracy* (Harlow: Routledge, 1999), p. 76.

⁸⁴ N. P. Koliupanov ‘*Obshchii vzgliad na pervyi period istorii zemskikh sobranii na Rossii*’ in *Vestnik Evropy, zhurnal istoriko-politicheskikh nauk*, (St. Petersburg: Tipografia F. S. Sushchinskago, 1867), II, p. 9.

However, this group's notoriety was considered a problem by the government, who during the second half of the 19th century saw the rise of political activism as connected to this middle class of professional *intelligenty*. For example, in December 1866 a 'Senate clarification appeared, which made it possible for provincial governors to remove those [third element subjects] who were considered unreliable, even if they were elected members of the assemblies'.⁸⁵ The political activist I. P. Belokonskiĭ described how the distrust of these officials was clear from an early stage: 'Already, for example, in 1866, a circular of the Minister of Internal Affairs on October 12th revealed the fear of the serving *zemstvo intelligentsiia*, the already emerging "third element": *zemstvo* employees – doctors, teachers, etc... – were put under the full dependence of the administration'.⁸⁶ In this assertion, Belokonskiĭ refers to a categorisation that distinguished between the different kinds of officials in provincial administration: the first element were those employed in the bureaucratic and state apparatuses, the second consisted of *zemstva* elected deputies and the third element included the large number of professionals who were hired by *zemstva* institutions, such as doctors, lawyers and teachers.⁸⁷

The emergence of this third element represents one of the most important consequences of the Great Reforms that affected the European section of the empire. By changing some of the structures that had ruled Russian life until then, the autocracy created the conditions for the emergence of a civil society – *obshchestvennost'* – that would play a significant role in the political development of the empire until the revolution in 1917. The creation of this space between family and state, and at the same time, the conscious realisation of the separation of state and society through the means of public administration, allowed these professionals to develop a service ethos that set their commitment to society apart from what could be found in bureaucratic management.

These new professionals, who positioned themselves as an alternative to the state in peoples' dealings with the administration of their lives, imbued the *zemstva* with this sense of service. By their activities, the administrative provincial landscape was furnished with a structure mirroring that of the governor and his bureaucracy that nurtured a sense of engagement with the public realm, a place where local populations could address their locality's problems by counting on a body of individuals that were there to serve the people, a distinguishable entity who needed an alternative to bureaucratic management.

⁸⁵ Alt'shuller, *Zemstvo v Sibiri*, p. 51.

⁸⁶ Belokonskiĭ, *Zemskoe dvizhenie*, pp. 3–4.

⁸⁷ Timberlake, 'The Zemstvo and the Development of a Russian Middle Class', p. 165.

Siberia and the History and Consequences of Absence

The development of a civil society in European Russia represented a turning point in the political context of that section of the empire, as it fundamentally altered the administrative landscape. Through the formation of all-class institutions that erected themselves as parallel structures to that of the bureaucratic power of the governors, it was possible to imagine policy and make decisions beyond the parochial or immediate social sphere. *Zemstva*, therefore, became the canvas on which the whole of the empire could be envisaged, even where these ideas could not be translated into action. The previous public organisations existing in the empire did not have the scope or the ingrained possibility of growing to potentially become a representative body on a national scale, so the emergence of these institutions had profound consequences for the integration of the empire's core regions.

However, as we have seen, Siberia was not included within these reforms' reach. This was because its lack of peasants, nobles and 'prepared' (i.e. trained) people to whom care of the administration could be entrusted, as well as the autonomist movement which was regarded with anxiety from the metropolitan centre. For these reasons, during the second half of the 19th century, Siberia enjoyed a type of administration that was purely bureaucratic and, up until the 1880s, 'special', as it remained under the authority of the Governors-general. The administrative landscape of 1860s Siberia had been established by Speranskiĭ in the reforms of 1822. This 'second discovery'⁸⁸ of a region that had hitherto remained an extractive and penal colony, became the foundation of the administrative structure found in western Siberia until the 1880s and, for the rest of the region, until the fall of the empire.

Speranskiĭ's reforms divided Siberia into two major macro-regions – western and eastern Siberia, as can be seen in the first quadrant of – that were under the authority of the Governors-general, figures that held both political and military power as these were considered frontier regions populated by potentially subversive natives and exposed to foreign invasions. The civil-military nature of Governors-generals' power was also instrumental in managing the settled Cossack population living in the region, acting as frontier patrol and local military force helping with the movement and confinement of the

⁸⁸ See Raeff, who calls the reformer's work on Siberia a watershed moment in the history of Siberia that brought a hitherto non-existent attention to the region, which prompts him to refer to this moment as a second discovery of Siberia.

exiled population. Therefore, entrusting administration to military figures was of utmost importance for ruling these regions. Each of these Governor-generalships was subdivided into provinces which functioned in the same way as they did in European Russia, that is, headed by a governor, directly subordinated to the Governor-general, who ruled aided by the main bureaucrats gathered in Provincial Boards. Of course, the spatial dimensions of Siberia, the scattered nature of its population, as well as its distance from the centre, allowed for some exceptions in its administrative composition and for a less dense network of provincial management than in the European core of the empire. The latter resulted in a weakened bureaucratic oversight of Siberia as well as allowing for the potential of widespread abuse in the absence of authority checks.⁸⁹ This same problem made the ministerial delegates into less intrusive figures, being rarely seen throughout the Siberian vastness.

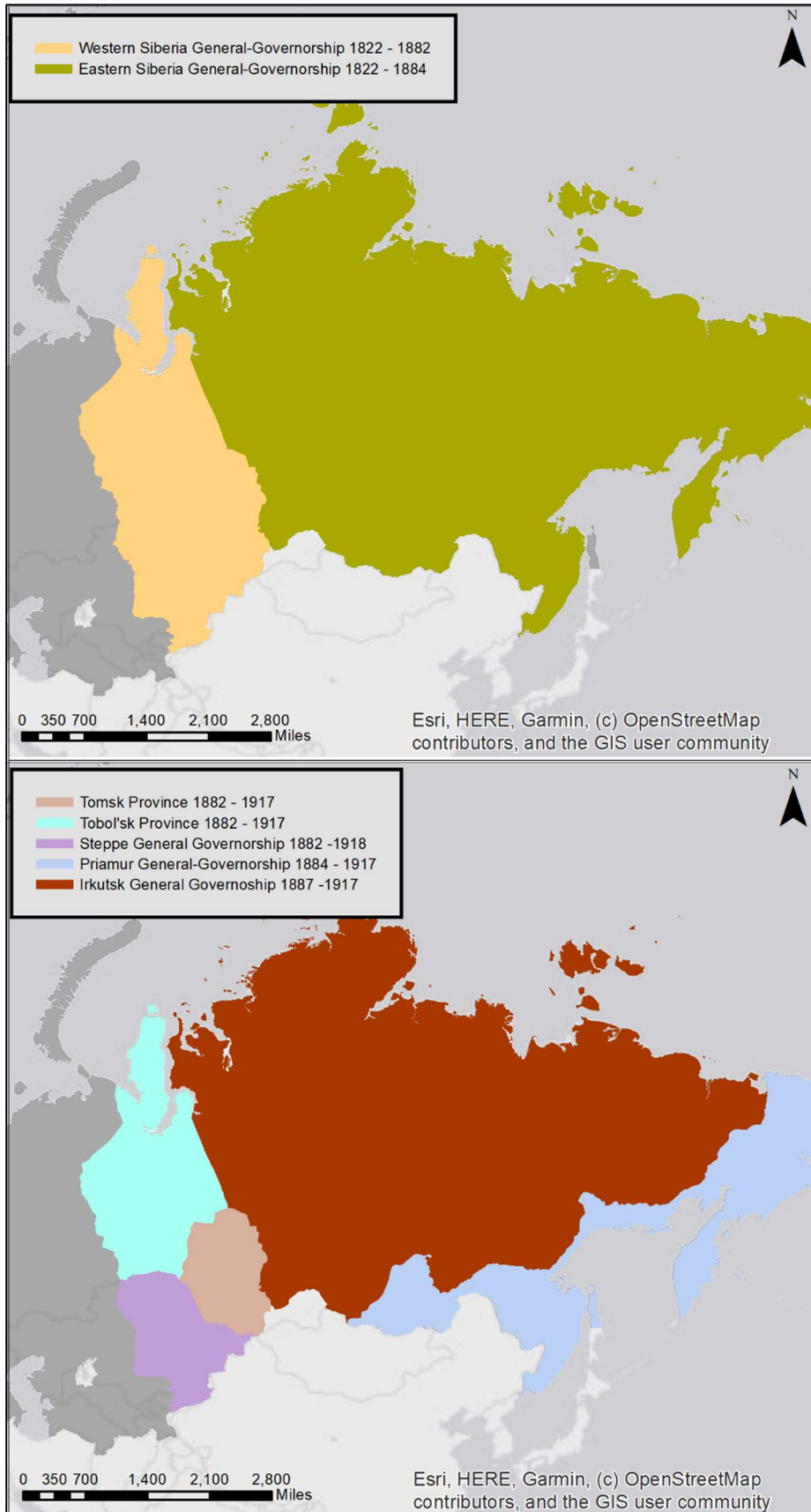
In terms of public organisations, Siberia did not have much in comparison with pre-reform European Russia. Speranskiĭ's time in the region was fully devoted to reorganising an administration that was already well-known in the metropolis as a refuge for abusive bureaucrats. To stop this system, an advisory council was introduced, formed by elected local notables acting as a check on the power of governors. This decision was the result of Speranskiĭ's liberal thinking and his realisation that colonial domains that were not, in some way or another, organically integrated with their metropolises tended to secede, as the Latin and North American examples were showing during the same period.⁹⁰ Therefore, it was thought that the Siberian merchant class could represent this element of openness to curtail the unlimited power of governors and integrate the region into the empire's core. However, this idea was later dismissed from the regulations of 1822 as Speranskiĭ took a very dim view of Siberia's merchants, deciding he would not trust them as the counterbalance to bureaucratic power.⁹¹

⁸⁹ See Janet M. Hartley, *Siberia: A History of the People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), especially chapter 11, Governing and Governed.

⁹⁰ See Raeff, *Siberia and the Reforms of 1822*, pp. 45–46. See also John Gooding, 'The Liberalism of Michael Speransky', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 64.3 (1986), 401–24.

⁹¹ See Raeff, *Siberia and the Reforms of 1822*.

Figure 2 Siberian Governor-generalships between 1822 and 1882 and Siberia's territorial division after 1882



Besides this failed attempt at embryonic openness, there were other public organisations, mainly of *soslovie* nature, in the form of rural communities and different urban classes who gathered in city dumas and were controlled by the local administration. Similarly, the organs of the press were instrumental in eliciting openness and accountability from administrative figures. The central government limited their expansion to Siberia just as they did with *zemstva*. In 1837, Nicholas I ordered the creation of provincial newspapers in 42 provinces with the purpose of augmenting the well of knowledge produced about local settings in the empire. However, this policy was not approved for the Siberian provinces ‘despite their strong manuscript and print culture’.⁹² It was only twenty years later, in 1857, that the press was allowed to develop in the region, which affected the development of a public opinion in the region. Until then, there were only some short-lived Bible societies in major urban centres such as Irkutsk and Tobol’sk founded with Speranskiĭ’s support, but they were not significant numerically or geographically.⁹³ Therefore, it is possible to conclude that a public realm of communication was virtually inexistent in the Siberian context up until 1857, when the first official and non-official publications began to circulate.⁹⁴

Despite these issues, the Siberian territories were not an inert body and when the discussions that erupted with the Great Reforms spilled into the region, there were calls from Siberians wishing to promote the expansion of *zemstva* to the areas beyond the Urals. The first calls came in a piece published in the Russian free press established by Herzen in London. In 1862, the correspondence section of his journal *Kolokol* featured a letter from a Siberian inhabitant who put forward the idea that administrative reform from above, as had been performed in Siberia to that point, was ineffective in providing the necessary changes to local administration. In his view:

We need different measures and we need them in accordance with all judicial and economic administrations, with electors not from the nobility (who do not exist in Siberia), but from the same mass of tax-paying, and free estates, who live there. This alone can save Siberia from the "Russian" bureaucracy, which comes here to make money and a career by hook or by crook.⁹⁵

⁹² Susan Smith-Peter, ‘The Russian Provincial Newspaper and Its Public, 1788–1864’, *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, 1908, 2008, 64 (p. 11).

⁹³ Watrous, *Russia’s ‘Land of the Future’*, p. 33.

⁹⁴ The topic of the press in Siberia will be developed in Chapter 4.

⁹⁵ Quoted in Alt’shuller, ‘*Zemstvo v Sibiri*’, p. 16.

The appraisal given in this letter sets the tone of the discussion about administrative transformation on a similar level to the debates being had in the European section of the empire. As the activities of *sibiriaki* were also demonstrating there during this period, the letter shows that there was a broad understanding that reform could mean the furthering of bureaucratic control from the metropolis or the emergence of a public administration based on elective mechanisms. This situation was also recognised as the guiding force for the whole period up to 1916 by the Siberian lawyer M. I. Alt'shuller, who characterised the debate about *zemstva* in Siberia as being 'a very interesting picture of the rivalry between the principles of self-government and bureaucracy'.⁹⁶

Calls for the implementation of *zemstva* in Siberia were uttered from the region at different moments in the 19th and early 20th centuries as it was understood that, besides the fact of not having a peasantry or landed gentry that would be regulated by these institutions, 'the advantages of *zemstvo* institutions, with their pre-bureaucratic prerogatives, [...] were so obvious that it was necessary to raise the issue of the general distribution of the *zemstvo* institutions when they were introduced into the provinces of Russia,'⁹⁷ as Alt'shuller argued. As soon as the 1864 regulations were announced, there were instructions from the State Council to the governors of territories outside the original *zemstva* range to study the possibility of their application in their regions. However, these studies dismissed their application for the foreseeable future in different areas because of practical difficulties of implementation. In an official statement, Interior Minister Valuev was quoted saying that: 'As for the Siberian provinces themselves, the inquiries on this subject with the local governors there have not yet begun, and with due respect to the Siberian region, the underdevelopment of *zemstvo* elements in the region, [means that it] cannot be the first in line'.⁹⁸ This declaration implied that there were no intentions to introduce these institutions during its first years given the absence of an urgent demand from the heads of Siberian administration. Also, Valuev's mention of the lack of trained personnel to take public administration in their hands can be interpreted as part of the developmental arguments that maintained the line of self-government institutions within European Russia. It gives us a glimpse into how 'differential rights, if indefinitely prolonged, could be just as effective'⁹⁹ in crafting colonial differences, as Morrison has argued. This was made even clearer after the Siberian regionalists' affair had instilled doubts about the territorial integrity of the empire, as discussed in the introductory

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Alt'shuller, '*Zemstvo v Sibiri*', p. 28.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 30.

⁹⁹ Morrison, 'Metropole, Colony, Imperial Citizenship', p. 334.

chapter.¹⁰⁰ To make matters worse, this incident was later connected to the insurrection of Polish exiles – sent to Siberia after the Polish rebellion of 1863 – in 1866 when 700 political prisoners revolted against authorities while doing hard labour in southern Baikal.¹⁰¹

The 1870s witnessed a new phase of Siberians' interest in being allowed to participate in the affairs of government by having public institutions. The intellectual leaders of the regionalist movement that spread through the region in the 1860s were pardoned and many of them returned to Siberia looking for positions. This period also coincided with the appointment of Nikolaï Gennadevich Kaznakov as Governor-general of western Siberia, a figure who enjoyed quite a favourable reputation among locals during the six years he oversaw the macro-region. Under his auspices, Iadrintsev, one of the most prominent figures of the regionalist movement, was put in the service of the administrative structure with the mission of intensifying the collection of statistical information that was being fed to central organisations in St. Petersburg for the elaboration of policy through the empire.

The process of collecting statistical information for producing policy was probably one of the high points in the Siberians' attempt to develop a public sphere of activities. As Susan Smith-Harris has suggested, the creation of the statistical committees in provincial capitals in 1830 and the emergence of provincial newspapers in 1837 became the foundation upon which *zemstva* stood. They functioned as the example of a social sphere devoted to cataloguing the regions and explained the 'phenomenal growth of public activity during the Great Reforms and after'.¹⁰² After their introduction in the provinces, the statistical committees and *vedomosti* enabled intellectuals to work together in a forum designed to provide the government with the necessary information to design policy. Until that point, governors' annual reports were the only regularly produced briefings informing the centre about the state of the provinces. The creation of these local committees was of great relevance for the government, as it complemented these reports with useful information in an epoch of growing interest for knowledge as a means of control, an issue that was especially relevant for taxing purposes.¹⁰³ However,

¹⁰⁰ See Daniel Brower, *Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 20–24. The author puts forward the idea that territorial cohesion was a definitive factor in colonial policy for the Russian empire during the second half of the 19th century.

¹⁰¹ Rainbow, *Siberian Patriots*, p. 107.

¹⁰² Smith-Peter, 'The Russian Provincial Newspaper', p. 3.

¹⁰³ See Yanni Kotsonis, *States of Obligation: Taxes and Citizenship in the Russian Empire and Early Soviet Republic* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016). See also Susan Smith-Peter, 'Defining the Russian People: Konstantin Arsen'ev and Russian Statistics before 1861', *History of Science*, 45.1 (2007), 47–64;

participation in these institutions was also quite significant in the development of public involvement in state affairs. While it is widely argued that literary comment, such as thick journals in the first half of the 19th century, were the only places where public debate on relevant social issues took place, statistics were also used for this purpose, as this kind of description ‘had the aura of science and objectivity, [therefore] criticisms that censors never would have allowed in more literary forms were published in statistical essays’.¹⁰⁴

The emergence of *vedomosti* in Siberia, as has been already mentioned, was only permitted in 1857 and the first branch of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society (hereafter IRGO), charged with the recollection of ethnographic and statistical data, was established in 1851 in Siberia. Intellectuals’ participation in these two organisms, as Rainbow has argued, shows that the Siberian *intelligenty* were embracing what they saw as a means by which they could make the central government aware of Siberia’s needs, regardless of whether the metropolitan authorities would be disposed to listen to their advice. Additionally, intellectuals used their position to ‘to assert their homeland’s particularity, which was central to their claim that eventually Siberia ought to be an autonomous territory’.¹⁰⁵

In a period of growing connections between Siberia’s *intelligentsiia* and the bureaucratic administration, one of Siberia’s main items among their regional demands came to fruition: the project of a Siberian university. Although it was approved over fifty years after it was first discussed and it only materialised in 1888, it fulfilled one of the longest standing desires of Siberia’s regionalists during Kaznakov’s term as Governor-general.

This period of productive engagement between society and bureaucracy during the 1870s and early 1880s came to an end after the regicide of Alexander II and the accession of Alexander III. Amid the celebrations of the three hundred years of the colonisation of Siberia in 1881, there was enthusiasm among the educated public, both in the metropolis and in Siberia itself, for further reforms. Indeed, there were formal petitions coming from the Eniseïsk, Tomsk and Irkutsk city dumas asking for the introduction of reforms in the region.¹⁰⁶ However, all these initial hopes were dismissed when the newly-crowned monarch declared his ‘firm determination to safeguard and

Juliette Cadiot, ‘Searching for Nationality: Statistics and National Categories at the End of the Russian Empire (1897–1917)’, *The Russian Review*, 64.3 (2005), 440–55.

¹⁰⁴ Smith-Peter, ‘The Russian Provincial Newspaper’, p. 5.

¹⁰⁵ Rainbow, *Siberian Patriots*, p. 130.

¹⁰⁶ See Ivan V. Shcheglov, ‘K voprosu o dne prazdnovaniia 300-letii Sibiri’, *Ezhenedel’naia gazeta Sibir’*, 3 May 1881, pp. 4–5; ‘Po povodu napominaniia o predstoiashchem 300-letii Sibiri’, *Ezhenedel’naia gazeta Sibir’*, 7 June 1881, p. 1.

assert, for the benefit of the people, the autocratic power with all confidence in it, with faith, strength and truth'.¹⁰⁷ During the 1880s, different commissions were set up to review the status of *zemstva* in the European core and, as discussed in the previous section, their restructuring reinforced the bureaucratic and noble element within their composition. During this period, different measures were put in practice in Siberia going in the same direction.

In 1882, for example, the central government changed Speranskiĭ's administrative division of Siberia. The western Governor-generalship was abolished and the region was divided into Tomsk and Tobol'sk provinces, as shown in the second quadrant of , which from that time on would cease to be 'subordinate to a quasi-independent Governor-general, but [instead] to governors directly accountable to the Ministry of the Interior'.¹⁰⁸ This measure was in part motivated by the fact that colonial expansion in Central Asia and the acquisition of the Amur during the 1860s meant this region was no longer exposed to foreign borders, making a military power redundant. It also introduced Siberia's western provinces to the normal European administration of the centre but without the privileges enjoyed in those parts of the empire, such as public bodies of self-government. Within this same restructuring of territorial divisions, the Steppe Governor-generalship with its centre in Omsk was created as well as the Priamur Governor-generalship. Eastern Siberia was renamed as the Irkutsk Governor-generalship in 1887, a measure that effectively removed the name 'Siberia' from all administrative classifications, as shown in .

This norm was in line with measures taken in 'the mid-1860s by changing the name of the Kingdom of Poland to the Vistula provinces, a geographical term with no historical or ethnic connotations'.¹⁰⁹ The elimination of Siberia as a territorial category within the empire did not erase it from Siberians' self-understanding, as a later essay about the *zemstvo* question in Siberia written by Sergeĭ Ivanovich Akerblom shows. In it, the author reclaims the region's name, citing the work of his fellow countryman and renowned man of science Dmitriĭ Ivanovich Mendeleev:

We can conclude that for Mendeleev, as well as for the drafters of various Siberian bills, it is quite clear that vast separate areas, in several provinces, are united by common conditions and constitute, according to Mendeleev, special "lands" or "regions" [...] At the same time, with such a

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Alt'shuller, '*Zemstvo v Sibiri*', p. 47.

¹⁰⁸ Watrous, *Russia's 'Land of the Future'*, p. 624.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 625.

division of the Russian Federation, Siberia in the usual geographic sense is not united in one "land", but in several countries, just like European Russia.¹¹⁰

The elimination of the name of Siberia can be understood as a way of assimilating the region without taking into account its own terms or its self-description. It can therefore be regarded as part of a repertoire of tools deployed by the central government to integrate the region without having to make concessions to its population.

Discussions about the Trans-Siberian Railway were also involved in the debates about the mechanisms that helped in integrating the region more firmly with the metropolitan centre, while at the same excluding it from fully participating in policy decisions. In a polemical article published in a conservative Siberian journal, *Sibirskii vestnik*, the journalist criticises *Vostochnoe obozrenie* – a journal defined by its regionalist outlook – for their position on the issues of railways coming to Siberia. The journalist summed up the regionalists' position ironically, by saying that: 'After all, until now, this was the external route of communication, against which every true Siberian patriot was obliged to stand up, protecting Siberian cheese from the predatory assassination attempts by the "metropolis"'¹¹¹, referring to protectionist arguments held by *oblastniki* against the railway. In their view, the position held by regionalists was untenable and was denounced more than once in *Sibirskii vestnik*, as the debate around the construction of the railway developed throughout the 1880s:

In the eyes of these people [regionalists in *Vostochnoe obozrenie*], all that contributes to the greater communion of the "colony" with the "metropolis," everything that links Siberia to the rest of Russia – for example, the railway – is harmful to our frontier provinces, and all who do not share their ignorant views are Siberia's enemies.¹¹²

By engaging in an open debate with *Vostochnoe obozrenie* about the issue of the trans-Siberian railway, *Sibirskii vestnik* illustrated the importance that was attached to the construction of the train as, in their view, it would be the vehicle by which the subordinated geographical position of Siberia could finally be overcome. The image *Sibirskii vestnik* puts forward follows the lead of the metropolitan press, which also

¹¹⁰ *Sbornik o zemstve v Sibiri: materialy po razrabotke voprosa na mestakh i v zakonodatel'nykh uchrezhdeniakh*, (St. Petersburg: Russkaia Siuropechatnia, 1912), p. 33.

¹¹¹ 'Ot redaktora, 1886 2 marta', *Sibirskii vestnik, politiki, literatury i obshchestvennoi zhizni*, 2 March 1886, p. 2.

¹¹² 'Ot redaktora, 1887 1 marta', *Sibirskii vestnik, politiki, literatury i obshchestvennoi zhizni*, 1 March 1887, p. 1.

engaged in ridiculing regionalists' positions on this matter. In an 1886 article in the *Moskovskie vedomosti*, it was suggested that:

The imaginary "independence of the Siberian colony" could only appear in the minds and lips of the Siberian "publicists" thanks to the vastness of space. The only way to tightly connect the political and economic centres of Russia with the eastern periphery would certainly be the Siberian Railway. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Siberian "colonists" [*kolonisty*] do not want to hear about this road. They do not find enough gloomy colours to scare Siberians with those terrible consequences that will be caused by the coming of the railway "from Russia."¹¹³

Opposition to these plans aroused anxieties in the capitals of European Russia. As Hundley has argued, maintaining the isolation of the Asiatic section of the empire could eventually lead to separatisms or land grabs by imperial neighbours, a particularly delicate topic because of the presence of varied religious minorities along the borders of the empire whose spiritual centres lay just beyond the Russian frontier.¹¹⁴ Conservatives' denunciations of regionalists' colonial language served the purpose of aggravating their political position, as Siberian regionalists were already on the radar of imperial authorities.

However, for Siberian regionalists the issue of the train was analysed from a different perspective. In their view, the discussion of the railway should be debated with attention to all possible consequences:

Everyone will remember well with what clamour and enthusiasm society, including Irkutsk citizens, welcomed the railway project through Siberia. And how indignantly were some Siberians treated when they dared to doubt the economic benefits of the railway and desired caution in this matter. After all, these were obscurantists, conservatives, and supporters of Sino-Siberian seclusion.¹¹⁵

Vostochnoe obozrenie wished to counter the criticism levelled against them, by stating that they were not occupying an isolationist position or giving preference to drift towards Chinese influence. On the contrary, they wanted to support the construction of the railway, while making sure its development considered local interests. As stated in the same article, Siberians

¹¹³ Mikhail Nikiforovich Katkov, *Sobranie peredovykh statei Moskovskikh vedomostei 1886 god* (Moscow: Izdanie S. P. Katkovoï, 1898), p. 46.

¹¹⁴ See Hundley, 'Defending the Periphery'.

¹¹⁵ 'Ocherki Sibirskoi obshchestvennoi zhizni', *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, 3 July 1888, pp. 9–10 (p. 9).

have nothing against Siberia's connection with the rest of the world "[...]. We only wished to temper the raptures, reminding people that one railway will not bring back life on its own, and it is hard to think it can. Siberians need to protect themselves from speculation and bad influences that are inevitable under this economic system, where the distiller, the cabaret owner, and the moneylender can take over the market, stepping over labourers and producers' interest."¹¹⁶

Their cautionary call regarding the railway was explained by an episode connected with the visit of Russian European engineers charged with finding the most suitable, and economically viable, route for the train lines. In this meeting, *Vostochnoe obozrenie* narrated Irkutsk leaders' disappointment when meeting with train engineers as they were informed that the rails would be laid '7 or 10 *verst* [7,42 to 10,6 km] away from the city, so it will not touch Irkutsk and head around Baikal. Imagine the disappointment of the [local] people who dreamed of hotels, railway inns, buffets and sandwiches and all the benefits that railways give to cities'.¹¹⁷ The discussions emerging around the delineation of the railway, and the role assigned to engineers coming from the capital to survey the potential routes, appears in a travel diary by John Foster Fraser (1902), who offers a similar account of the way in which these decisions were made

Tomsk, the capital of Siberia, is eighty-two *versts* from the junction station of Taiga [...] And why doesn't the Great Trans-Siberian Railway run through the capital? [...] The answer lay in corruption. 'How much will you give us if we bring the line past Tomsk?' asked the surveyors and engineers who mapped the route'. 'Nothing!' replied Tomsk. 'We are the capital of Siberia, and you can't avoid coming here'. 'Oh, can't we?' replied the route finders. 'If you don't produce so many thousand roubles there will be insurmountable engineering difficulties that will prevent us coming within a long way from Tomsk'. These engineering difficulties were discovered, and so the Trans-Siberian Railway sweeps along fifty miles to the south of Tomsk.¹¹⁸

As can be seen, the issue of the railway was a contentious one that allowed Siberians the opportunity to define the terms in which their further inclusion into imperial

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ John Foster Fraser, *The Real Siberia: Together with an Account of a Dash Through Manchuria* (London: New York: Paris: Melbourne: Cassell, 1902), pp. 59–60.

networks should work. The debates that erupted around the Trans-Siberian Railway echoed and were connected to those about the necessity of having *zemstva* in Siberia. What was at stake for them, was their capacity to effect and affect imperial policy in the region, while avoiding being subjected to policy designed in the imperial centre without taking into consideration locals' expertise.

This same issue arose in Siberia when one of the most controversial elements in the application of the 1890 reforms to *zemstva* institutions in the European section of the empire, the introduction of land captains, was eventually applied to Siberia in an attempt to reinforce bureaucratic control over the peasant population. In the words of the Siberian publicist Grigorii Ivanovich Zhernovkov:

Among the administrators of Siberia, special attention needs to be paid to the peasant captain, who was created in the image and likeness of the Russian land captain. Out of the desire to create a local authority close to the population, the government, always faithful to its guardianship and paternal concerns, even when it was not asked for, created a peasant captain. This time the government, as always, thought that the Russian people, as well as the Siberians, needed more administrative help and diapers than public self-government.¹¹⁹

Beyond the ironical remarks made by Zhernovkov, it is possible to see that the movement towards the creation of public administrative structures in Siberia was stemmed in favour of applying rigid bureaucratic controls in the region as was happening in the rest of the empire from the accession of Alexander III onwards. According to the 'Temporary Regulations on Peasant Captains' (*Vremennogo polozeniia o krest'ianskikh nachal'nikakh*) of 3 June 1898, overseers for peasant administration were introduced by the central government in the Siberian provinces of Tomsk and Tobol'sk. Later the Irkutsk and the Steppe Governor-generalship were incorporated into this legislation, creating strong bureaucratic and police supervision over the peasant population. Moreover, as the region was devoid of a local landowning nobility, these posts were manned by European Russians who came to the region to 'make easy money or scape from debt,'¹²⁰ as Tomohiko has argued.

¹¹⁹ Zhernovkov, *Sibir' i pravitel'stvo*, p. 25.

¹²⁰ Uyama, 'Repression of Kazakh Intellectuals', p. 693. See also N. V. Ekeev, 'The Burkhanist Movement in Altai in 1904–1905', *Anthropology and Archeology of Eurasia*, 45.2 (2006), 44–71; V. N. Nikulin, 'Krest'ianskie nachal'niki v Sibiri (1898–1917 gg.)', *Voprosy istorii*, 1, 1987, 170–75; Viktoriia V. Germizeeva, 'Krest'ianskie nachal'niki zapadnoi Sibiri: chislenost' i sostav (1898–1917 gg.)', *Sovremennye problemy nauki i obrazovaniia*, 4, 2014; Gaudin, *Ruling Peasants*.

Siberians' awareness of the need for reforms that attended to their own needs and regional particularities was evident from their debates about the terms in which an expansion of *zemstva* institutions should occur after the 1890 reforms had changed their original shape. In discussions about the expansion of *zemstva* institutions into Siberia, held at the beginning of the 20th century in different urban dumas throughout the region, there was agreement about avoiding the current organisation of *zemstva* in the form they had taken in European Russia after the 1890 reforms:

First of all, the authors of all projects are not satisfied with the introduction in Siberia of the existing provisions of the *zemstvo* in European Russia. In almost all projects, both western and eastern Siberia, there are indications that the existing *zemstvo* situation in European Russia, on the one hand, has already been condemned by life itself because it gives little self-activity to the population, and on the other hand, Siberia by virtue of "ethnographic, economic, socio-legal and historical-geographical conditions" is in possession of special characteristics that should affect the local government.¹²¹

As outlined by this compilation, there was a general awareness in Siberia that the shape of public institutions of self-government was straying from its original purposes and that such reactionary changes needed to be avoided to protect the self-government powers to which they aspired.

However, the beginning of the 20th century, which saw the expansion of *zemstva* institutions to different parts of the empire, remained a hopeful moment for those who harboured ambitions for self-government in Siberia. The war with Japan, as had happened with the Crimean War half a century before, opened up the possibility of negotiating the expansion of societal structures within the empire. The critical role *zemstva* played in organising the war effort and providing much needed home-front aid reinforced *zemstsy*'s demands for greater power.¹²² The creation of the State Duma following the revolution of 1905 can be read as a consequence of this and Siberian representatives were allowed within this body's conformation. Among them, Akerblom and Aleksandr A. Kornilov

¹²¹ *Sbornik o zemstve v Sibiri*, p. 29.

¹²² Thomas Porter, 'The Emergence of Civil Society in Late Imperial Russia: The Impact of the Russo-Japanese and First World Wars on Russian Social and Political Life, 1904–1917', *War & Society*, 23.1, 40–60; Tsuchiya Yoshifuru, 'The Role Of The Home Front In The Russo-Japanese War', in *Rethinking the Russo-Japanese War, 1904–5*, ed. by John W. M. Chapman and Chiharu Inaba (Kent: Global Oriental, 2007), VOL. II, 218–31.

wrote essays supporting the expansion of *zemstva* to Siberia¹²³ and put together a petition consisting of a summary of drafts and projects proposed by different Siberian organisations to declare the form in which they desired the application of the *zemstvo* legislation in Siberia.¹²⁴ However, when the empire came to its final collapse in the early months of 1917, the introduction of these self-government institutions had never been realised, even after their application in the Vistula provinces in 1911, a region that possessed an even more conflictive record in its relationship to the metropolis. It was only under the Provisional Government in 1917 that *zemstva* were allowed to exist in Siberia. They were a short-lived institution as the October Revolution ended self-government structures within a matter of months.

Conclusion

The end of the Crimean War inaugurated a period of great upheaval in the Russian empire. The liberation of the serfs and the creation of self-government institutions created spaces in the imperial structure that began to be filled by those subjects that did not fit into the traditional social compartments that had dominated Russia to that point. The state's intention to modernise the empire in a gradual fashion, without loosening the reins of autocratic control, was challenged by the people called to support and give shape to these moderate reforms. The outcome of this process was a social landscape that exceeded what the autocracy had wished for in the first place. The *zemstvo* regulations created, and were created by, a social segment that wished for further involvement with the issues affecting their local lives and their wider identities.

This process of societal dynamism, in which the growth of civil society played a central role, did not flourish in the Siberian realm. It was initially argued that this limitation had to do with the gentry-serf nature of the *zemstvo* regulations, characteristics that precluded its establishment in Siberia. However, it appears from the study of the consequences of the introduction of these bodies in European Russia that the most complicated aspect of *zemstva* in European Russia had to do with the emergence of the third element, a social group that shared an ethos of service to their communities and who regarded themselves as separate from, and even opposed to, the main tool of autocratic

¹²³ See 'Vopros o vvedenii zemstva v do Vysochaishago reskripta 3 apreliia 1905 goda' by A. A. Kornilov and 'Razrabotka voprosa o zemstve v Sibiri so vremeni Vysochaishago reskripta 3 apreliia 1905 goda do kotsa deiatel'nosti 2-oï Gosudarstvennoï dумы. (Istorich. ocherk) by S. I. Akerblom in *Sbornik o Zemstve v Sibiri*.

¹²⁴ See *Sbornik o zemstve v Sibiri*.

control: the bureaucracy. It would, therefore, be possible to conclude that *zemstva*'s exclusion from the Siberian context has to do more with the recognition of the importance of these middle social groups, and with the state's awareness that the political activity carried out by these individuals could pose dangers to the status quo, as *zemtsy*'s importance resided in their capacity to erect themselves as a parallel structure to the power of governors in the provinces. This political development was to be avoided in Siberia by means of maintaining limits on *zemstva* activities west of the Urals. At the most, the Siberian *intelligentsia*'s inclusion in statistical data-gathering agencies gave them a supporting role within the policy design process for the region. The same can be said about the representatives going to the Duma in 1905. However, these outlets for participation were always dependent on the will of the central government and were never allowed to become institutions or a permanent feature of Siberia's political landscape.

The accumulation of governmental decisions that effectively kept Siberia outside the reach of *zemstva* institutions served to protect the power of the bureaucratic element in the region, while at the same time thwarting the political development of the local population as had happened in regions where *zemstva* were implemented. The developmental discourse that accompanied these cumulative decisions allowed the flourishing of a permanent sense of becoming but never reaching which has been identified as an underlying feature of colonial settings. It was preferable that a region which had already experienced autonomist upheavals remained on the passive side of the political initiative, so that no challenge could arise to the monopoly of Russia's colonial administrative government. As always, locals' concerns could be relegated and addressed in the form of petitions.

The imperial process of integration witnessed in the Russian empire during the second half of the 19th century, which was embodied in the Great Reforms and the push to create a degree of uniformity in administration, allowed Siberia to see the implementation of different measures that reinforced its connection to the imperial centre, in a progressive process of assimilation to the imperial core. However, Siberia's recurring coloniality manifested itself in *zemstva*'s absence, feeding the ambiguousness which has branded the relationship between European Russia and its Asiatic borderlands.

In an essay published in *Vostochnoe obozrenie* in 1882, a journalist reflected on the respective positions of state and society in the capitals and the provinces. In the capitals, he explained, the state was so much in evidence that society's interests were indistinguishable from it. In the provinces, however, the state made itself less felt, and therefore locals' concerns became more evident and gave primacy to society:

That is the reason why the provincial gaze is predisposed to be carried away not so much by the official side of common life and activities, but by its unofficial side. That is why it is much more than the metropolitan gaze, as we are absorbed by observation and study not of the dominant church, but of the schismatics, not of the law in force, but of customary law, not by written literature, but by oral accounts, not of the upper layers of the population, but of the lower, not of the life of the bureaucracy, but of the life of the populace, not on the ruling families, but on indigenous tribes, not questions of the court, but questions of punishment, and so on, and so forth.¹²⁵

Siberian regionalists understood that the view of the state as the primary force behind any social initiative needed to be replaced by a sense of belonging that rested in Siberians' own capacity to define the terms in which they would sustain their relationship with their brethren in European Russia. The story of *zemstva*'s failure to expand to Siberia, at a time when other bureaucratic measures were implemented to reinforce governmental control in the region, has been shown to function as a useful case study of how Siberia was imagined and acted upon from the centre. It reveals the multifaceted obstacles that Siberians' faced when they attempted to set the terms of their own self-definition.

¹²⁵ 'Gosudarstvo i obshchestvo', *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, 29 April 1882, pp. 3–5 (p. 4).

Chapter 3: Re-structuring Imperial Siberia: Misconduct and the Making of Imperial Rule in Asiatic Russia

On September 7th, 1874, a prosecution file was opened against a lower official of the imperial administration in western Siberia, Ivan Fedorovich Zhulebin, the Head (*gorodnichii*) of the city of Biisk. The case against him rested on a series of misdemeanours that he was alleged to have committed, which the Provincial Board, one of the main bodies of metropolitan oversight in the provinces that represented the bureaucratic elite in the region, considered to be in clear breach of correct procedures.

According to the prosecution, the whole affair started when a police officer named Kaimanakov, who worked in the Zmeinogorsk mines in the Altai region, was denounced for drunkenness and disorderly behaviour, and was arrested by a fellow police officer called Bekbulatov. Bekbulatov escorted his prisoner to the city of Biisk to prosecute him for his misdeeds, but the almost 400 *versts** between Zmeinogorsk and Biisk were not spent idly, as both the accused and his captor were evidently drunk when they presented themselves to the city authorities. As soon as they arrived, Kaimanakov loudly demanded to speak to the chief of police in Biisk, called Bogoliudov, saying he wanted to talk with him about a secret matter. Kaimanakov confessed that he and his escort, Bekbulatov, had killed three people in the city of Kliuchi in Altai, although he did not specify under what circumstances, how or where the bodies were buried or hidden, only stating that both should be in police custody. Bogoliudov – having consulted with the city chief Zhulebin and acting on his orders – decided that the accusations were serious, ordered the immediate arrest of Bekbulatov and started an investigation that entailed searching the houses of both police officers while they remained imprisoned in Biisk.

However, the investigation did not manage to find any proof of the alleged murders, and this unleashed a further series of repercussions. There had been no reports of missing people from the city of Kliuchi and the thorough search done in the houses of both of the accused men revealed no evidence of any killings. These findings were brought to the attention of the Tomsk Provincial Board, which began a second judicial process, this time against Zhulebin, the city chief. The reason given for this prosecution was the utterly irregular way Zhulebin and Bogoliudov had acted when dealing with the

case of Kaimanakov's accusations. First, there was the issue of taking a statement from a man in a drunken state. The Provincial Board considered that, according to the prescribed articles of the law, taking a statement – particularly a confession of serious offences – from a man who was not in full possession of his mental faculties was a breach of procedures that needed to be investigated because it violated all the existing rules for assessing accusations. Additionally, the Provincial Board questioned the investigation that Zhulebin had opened, since the police and city administration had no right to initiate criminal inquests, especially when these were based on accounts that had not been legally produced. The Provincial Board declared that 'the Police had no legitimate reason for opening the investigation, and even less so when these words were pronounced by a drunk person'.¹

For these reasons, the Provincial Board took disciplinary action against Zhulebin and ordered a criminal investigation into the unlawful search of the accuseds' houses and their unjustified imprisonment. However, a document dated August 1885 (eleven years after the episode) showed that Zhulebin had managed to evade the main punishment for administrative misconduct in imperial administration, that is, being prohibited from taking office again. Indeed, he rose to the position of Collegiate Assessor in the city of Biisk, which only represented a slight demotion from his former post of city Provost.²

The case against Zhulebin was in many ways an archetypical picture of the disorderly state of administration in 19th century Siberia. In the first place Kaimanakov, by being arrested for notorious bad behaviour while performing his imperial duties, epitomised the misconduct of officials that was often held to have pervaded imperial administration in the region. Secondly, Zhulebin's case reveals an inefficient bureaucratic machinery that only managed to produce a belated prosecution, as a result of a Siberian administration that was so thinly stretched throughout the region that it was impossible for it to have any real grasp of what was going on. More importantly though, this case shows us the emphasis that the imperial bureaucratic elites placed on legal formalism for assessing administrative performance. Zhulebin's poor administrative performance is seen to lie in his incorrect use of bureaucratic channels, despite having acted on the justified concern that homicides had been committed within his jurisdiction. This case

¹ Gosudarstvennii arkhiv Tomskoi oblasti (hereafter GATO), f.3 (Tomskoe gubernskoe upravlenie), op. 2, d. 1699, l. 4, 'Delo o provedenii rassledovaniia po faktu prevysheniia sluzhebnykh polnomochii Biiskim gorodnichim, kollezhskim asessorom I.F. Zhulebinym'.

² GATO, f.3, op. 2, d. 1699, l. 30.

revealed how the Provincial Board's upholding of idealised bureaucratic procedures clashed with the arbitrary or spontaneous ways in which justice worked on a local level. While arbitrariness and abuse of power was not unique to Siberia, its causes, and the meanings with which it was ascribed, were particular to this region and reflect the broader colonial practices discussed in this dissertation. Additionally, the emphasis placed on the procedural aspect must also be understood against the background of an important feature of imperial governance in Siberia, which is often neglected from institutional histories. Zhulebin and his colleagues were middle and lower officials born in Siberia who were being administratively disciplined by a Provincial Board mainly comprised of European Russians sent from the metropolitan centre to rule the region.³

Zhulebin's case must also be considered within the context of the reforms that were being applied in the European section of the empire. Self-government institutions there were gradually changing the way subjects experienced their day-to-day contact with administrative structures, as the civic duty that *zemstva* officials introduced to local management disrupted the purely bureaucratic direction that had hitherto been the main administrative concern. As Boris Mironov has argued regarding the introduction of *zemstva* in European Russia, by the 1870s these societal institutions were executing 'their responsibilities considerably more effectively than did state institutions' and they 'became the primary force in local administration, at least in *zemstvo* provinces'.⁴ In this sense, Zhulebin's case can be understood as the result of differences emerging from the existence of unreformed institutions in the region as discussed in the previous chapter. Keeping an exclusively bureaucratic management made Siberian officials accountable to metropolitan authorities, rather than to the local population under their jurisdiction as was the case in European Russia.

At the same time as these exclusionary measures were being rolled out, the Russian state needed to assert its presence in Siberia to justify its attachment to the rest of the empire. In this sense, the creation of the Trans-Siberian railway – which was discussed for two decades before construction officially began in 1891 –, the foundation of Tomsk University in 1888 and the extensive resettlement programme of European

³ *Pamiatnaia knizhka: litsam, sluzhashchim po raznym vedomstam Tomskoï gubernii* (Tomsk: Tomskoï gubernskoï tipografii, 1866), p. 29; N. S. Lar'kov and I. V. Chernova, *Politsmeistery, komissary, nachal'niki: rukovoditeli pravookhranitel'nykh organov Tomskoï gubernii, okruga i oblasti v XIX–XX vv.* (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 1999), p. 11.

⁴ Boris Nikolaevich Mironov, *A Social History of Imperial Russia, 1700–1917, Volume II* (Boulder: Routledge, 2000), p. 151.

Russian peasants in Siberia, were understood both as the result of the growing importance of Asia in inter-imperial affairs, and the need to strengthen Russia's foothold over a region that was considered of paramount importance.⁵ Tomsk province played an important role, as it was the westernmost section of Asiatic Russia and could therefore become the place in which colonial governance – with its strategies of incorporation and separation – could be better understood. It was the place in which the double process of strengthening colonial domination ran in parallel with the 'growth of the "imperial core," as it impinged upon the borderlands'.⁶ In this way, Tomsk's administration was in a liminal situation, between being a colonial structure and a European Russian institution, which makes it a convenient place to study the issue of Siberia's coloniality.

Within this context, this chapter explores how this administrative landscape can be understood in a way that deepens our knowledge of colonial relationships in Siberia. By reassessing Zhulebin's case and the many layers that encased it, it is possible to explore how his behaviour, and that of his fellow imperial officials, was framed by a legal system that made it inevitable that officials would act outside the existing legal frameworks when they addressed the contingencies of day-to-day administrative work. At the same time, the chapter explains how Zhulebin's position within and assessment by administrative provincial elites was undergirded by ethnic and cultural considerations. Finally, it helps me to demonstrate how his imperial performance had different meanings for the locality and for the wider imperial formation.

Building upon the structural analysis developed in the previous chapter, here I offer a more detailed analysis, a zooming into the inner, day-to-day workings of the administration of one of western Siberia's two provinces, the province of Tomsk, in order to find out how this process of preventing the growth of political activity developed in Siberia itself. By delving into the analysis of this one province and the imperial administration in charge of it, this chapter reveals how the bureaucratic structure governing imperial domains curbed the emergence of the political activity that was

⁵ See Siegelbaum, 'Paradise or Just a Little Bit Better?'; Lewis H. Siegelbaum and Leslie Page Moch, *Broad Is My Native Land: Repertoires and Regimes of Migration in Russia's Twentieth Century* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2014); David Moon, *The Russian Peasantry 1600–1930: The World the Peasants Made* (New York: Routledge, 2014); See Christine D. Worobec, *Peasant Russia: Family and Community in the Post-Emancipation Period* (Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1995).

⁶ Anatolii V. Remnev, 'Siberia and the Russian Far East in the Imperial Geography of Power', in *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700–1930*, ed. by Jane Burbank and Mark Von Hagen, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), pp. 425–54 (p. 442).

developing west of the Urals. I use a case study approach – which takes Tomsk’s imperial administration as the object of study – in order to comprehend the position in which Siberians found themselves during the second half of the 19th century, in a context devoid of the tools available in European Russia for the development of a civil society. In order to do this, I bring together the findings of the locally-produced studies of imperial administration, *kraevedenie*, with archival research conducted in Tomsk and St. Petersburg. By looking at imperial administrative service records, such as the Provincial Board’s hand-written registry of complaints against imperial officials in Tomsk, governors’ annual reports, provincial surveys and newspaper articles, and combining these with *kraevedenie*, it is possible to understand the aspects of Tomsk imperial governance that act as a microcosm of the workings of Siberia’s administration. Digging into the analysis of the bureaucratic machinery itself, this chapter reveals the ways in which the metropolitan imperial bureaucracy in Siberia managed to protect its hold over power in the region while deterring locals’ from achieving positions of influence.

Tomsk Administrative Structure in 19th Century Russia

Tomsk’s imperial administration was divided between a small Russian European elite and a Siberian-born middle and lower bureaucracy, a characteristic that was maintained throughout the period under study.⁷ This configuration was partly a consequence of the absence of nobles in Siberia; over time, it developed into a system that maintained the separation between higher and middle-lower officials during the second half of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. Although the central government introduced measures during this period that pointed towards harmonizing this province’s administration with that of European Russia, the segregation was maintained.⁸ Such an arrangement produced an administrative stagnation that allowed central authorities to prevent locals from attaining enough influence to turn local bureaucracy into an equivalent of societal administrative structures in European Russia,

⁷ See Dina V. Adrianova, ‘Sotsiokul’turnyĭ oblik kantseliarskikh sluzhitelei gubernskikh uchrezhdenii Zapadnoi Sibiri v 1895–1917 godakh’, *Nauchnii dialog*, 12, 2018; Irina L. Dameshek, ‘Chinovnichestvo kak “vysshii klass” Sibirskogo obshchestva: chislennost’, uroven’ obrazovaniia, material’noe polozenie, vliianie na obshchestvennuiu zhizn’’, *Izvestiia irkutskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta: seriia istoriia*, 1, 2013.

⁸ As explained in the previous chapter, Tomsk and Tobol’sk were introduced into the ‘normal’ imperial administration. That is, they went from answering to the authority of a Governor-general to that of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD).

where *zemstva* provided an institutional framework that devolved many functions to local communities.

Frolova argues that the composition of western Siberian bureaucracy in the pre-revolutionary period ‘remains comprehensively unexplored’.⁹ However, scholarship on imperial bureaucracy has shown that it was customary for a noble or a metropolitan civil servant – the most likely *soslovie* to attain the university degree necessary to reach high bureaucratic positions – to tour the provincial administration ‘disseminating the ways and manners of the imperial capital throughout the provinces, [helping] to colonise the Empire’.¹⁰ Similarly, Stephen Velychenko, studying the composition of higher imperial administration for the Ukraine in the 19th century, has concluded that ‘Russians clearly dominated the bureaucracy of the eight examined provinces’¹¹ stating that this was a fundamental part of the patronage networks that pervaded the bureaucratic system in the Russian empire working from St. Petersburg and Moscow.

Kraevedenie studies of Siberian imperial bureaucracy have complemented these conclusions by developing quantitative studies of *formuliarnye spiski* belonging to Siberian officials in specific cities. The aggregate conclusions of different authors’ analysis have produced a fragmentary picture of the composition of local administration that confirms this gap within Siberian administration. As Germizeeva has shown for the final years of the empire, and after the creation of Tomsk University, Russian European officials holding high positions in the bureaucracy represented more than a half of its members, while middle and lower positions were almost exclusively manned by Siberian officials.¹² Karchaeva has extended this analysis demonstrating that higher bureaucrats governing Siberia came mainly from Ukraine and the northwestern provinces of the empire.¹³

⁹ Tat’iana A. Frolova, ‘*Sotsiokul’turnyi oblik chinovnichestva Zapadnoi Sibiri v kontse XIX – nachale XX vv.*’ (Omsk; Omskii gosudarstvennyi tekhnicheskii universitet, 2006), p. 11.

¹⁰ Alexander Etkind, *Internal Colonization: Russia’s Imperial Experience* (Cambridge; Malden: Polity, 2011), p. 100.

¹¹ Stephen Velychenko, ‘Identities, Loyalties and Service in Imperial Russia: Who Administered the Borderlands?’, *Russian Review*, 54.2 (1995), 196.

¹² Viktoriia V. Germizeeva, *Gubernskaia administratsiia Zapadnoi Sibiri (1895 – febral’ 1917)* (Omsk: Omskii gosudarstvennyi tekhnicheskii universitet, 2015), p. 77.

¹³ Tat’iana Karchaeva, Denis Gergilev, and Mikhail Sever’ianov, ‘Kto oni – “pis’movoditeli” v Sibiri? Professional’naia kharakteristika mestnykh chinovnikov Rossiiskoi imperii v XIX – nachale XX vv.’, *Bylye Gody*, 43.1 (2017), p. 89.

Archival research conducted in the State Regional Archive of Tomsk allowed me to confirm this trend throughout the second half of the 19th century. For example, a circular from the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1852, at the beginning of the period I am looking at, made this point clear when stating that politically unreliable officials in the administration had to be removed from service throughout the Tomsk province as a part of a reactionary political clampdown carried out from St. Petersburg. However, the reaction was not to be implemented evenly throughout the administration, as ‘some misunderstandings arose in the Provinces: whether the mentioned Highest Decree should be applied to service-men from the nobility's gentry’.¹⁴ The problem was whether noble bureaucrats – who occupied high administrative positions – that had unreliable political allegiances should face the same punitive measures as the rank-and-file officials under suspicion. The Senate agreed that prosecutions in the administration should not be ‘extended to members elected from the nobility,’¹⁵ and decided by local courts. Instead, they should be sent to the central government in St. Petersburg for examination, as it was not possible to dismiss nobles without metropolitan consent. By creating different mechanisms in the treatment of perceived threats, the metropolitan government was acting within the existing legal framework of social estates, or *sosloviiia*. However, the class segregation these instructions entailed also helped in reinforcing the separation between a higher bureaucracy, where noble servicemen would normally serve, and a lower bureaucracy which was non-noble and mainly Siberian. In establishing different procedures for addressing political unreliability, which effectively submitted European Russians to metropolitan oversight instead of local supervision, the colonial government added a layer to the differences existing within the Siberian administration, establishing a gap that acquired both class and cultural meanings.

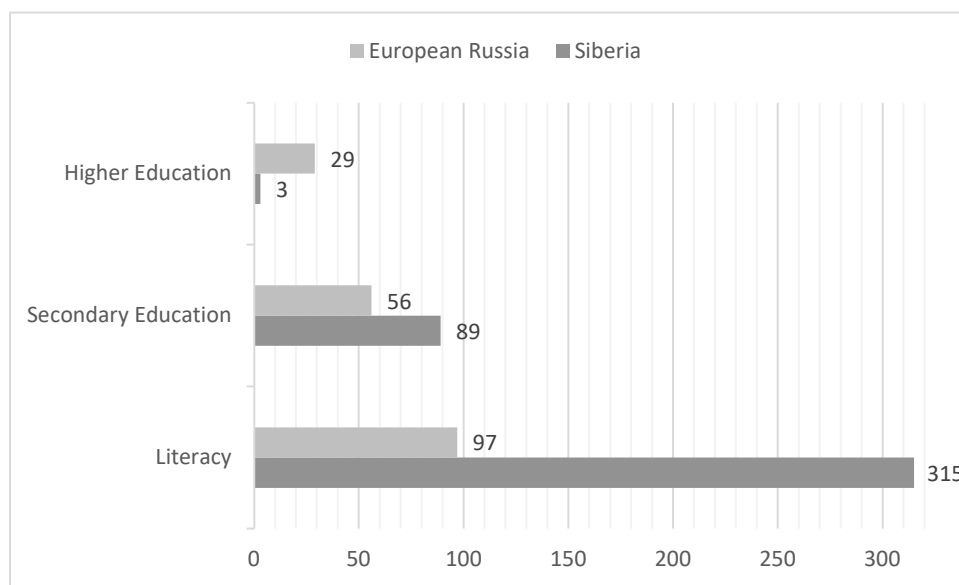
A later document from the same province illustrated this division in a more evident way. A file pertaining to 1863 and 1864 described the geographical origin of Tomsk’s officials by distinguishing between those coming from Siberia or European Russian provinces. Such information provided a snapshot of the composition of the bureaucracy in Tomsk, giving a sense of Siberia’s imperial administrative corps. This document was designed as having three broad categories organised according to education level: an individual could have higher education, i.e. university, academy or

¹⁴ GATO, f. 3, op. 2, d. 559, l. 2, 1852, ‘Tsirkuliar MVD o poriadke uvol’neniia politicheskii neblagonadezhnykh chinovnikov’.

¹⁵ GATO, f. 3, op. 2, d. 559, l. 2, 1852.

lyceum level; secondary education, i.e. gymnasiums and other educational institutions; or have attained a lower education level, meaning basic literacy. Each of these categories was subdivided according to whether the individual was born in Siberia or elsewhere in the empire, as shown in the following figure:

Figure 3: Education Level and Place of Birth for Officials in the Tomsk Guberniia for the Years 1863–1864



Source: ‘*O chislennosti chinovnikov i kantseliarskikh sluzhashchikh, okonchivshikh vysshie, srednie ili nizhie uchebnye zavedeniia*’. (GATO, f. 3, op. 2, d. 1057, ll. 12–118, 1863–1864.)

The contents found in this primary source enable several different levels of analysis. Firstly, these lists distinguished between those born in Siberia and those from Russian *guberniias*. The exclusionary difference made between these categories points towards an identity issue, which implied that there were regions of the country which were considered to be Russian by the designers of the survey while others were not.¹⁶ The custom of categorizing the people working in the imperial service by their level of education and origin was officially instituted in 1827,¹⁷ a period in which there was a growing metropolitan interest in changing from a religious understanding of the empire’s

¹⁶ See Leonid Gorizontov, ‘The “Great Circle” of Interior Russia: Representations of the Imperial Center in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries’, in *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700–1930*, ed. by Jane Burbank, Mark Von Hagen, and A. V. Remnev, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), pp. 67–93.

¹⁷ See Liubov Fedorovna Pisarkova, ‘Rossiiskii chinovnik na sluzhbe na kontse XVIII – pervoi polovine XIX veka’, *Chelovek*, 3 (1995).

population, to an ethnic and national logic during the reign of Nicholas I and the Russification policies carried out at the time.¹⁸ In this sense, defining bureaucrats as either Siberians or people from Russian *gubernii* implied a difference that had political, juridical and, more importantly, cultural implications which were fundamental in the process of creating differences in colonial settings. As the century progressed, and resettlement programmes moved almost four million peasants from European Russia into Siberia, it was frequent to see in statistical compilations, such as the 1897 census, the distinction between *starozhily* or *chaldony* – old settlers, referring to those people who considered themselves Siberians of Russian descent – and the Russian newcomers or *priezzhiĭ*, delimiting both groups within the region.¹⁹

The recognition of such difference in the Tomsk administration brings another dimension into the discussion of what Siberia meant to the metropolis. In this regard, the debate has revolved around its significance as either an integral part of the Russian culture, a frontier upon which Russia had expanded its culture, or a colony populated by alien cultures.²⁰ Imperial authorities in Siberia neglected the distinction between the native people of Siberia and Siberians of Russian descent. Although ethnicity was an underlying category that affected imperial policy and promoted intellectual involvement with *inorodtsy* in the imperial borderlands, imperial governance relied on *sosloviia* distinctions as they were considered objective categories without the potentially dangerous political content of *inorodtsy* or *natsional'nosti*.²¹ These contradictory

¹⁸ John W. Slocum, 'Who, and When, Were the Inorodtsy? The Evolution of the Category of "Aliens" in Imperial Russia', *The Russian Review*, 57.2 (1998).

¹⁹ See David Rainbow, 'Siberian Patriots: Participatory Autocracy and the Cohesion of the Russian Imperial State, 1858–1920.' (PhD diss. New York University, 2013), p. 165. See also Pëtr M. Golovachev, *Sibir': priroda, liudi, zhizn'* (Moscow: Tipografiia I. N. Kushnerev, 1902), pp. 82–83.

²⁰ See Mark Bassin, 'Inventing Siberia: Visions of the Russian East in the Early Nineteenth Century', *The American Historical Review*, 96.3 (1991); and Alberto Masoero, 'Territorial Colonization in Late Imperial Russia: Stages in the Development of a Concept', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 14.1 (2013).

²¹ See Marina Mogilner, 'Russian Physical Anthropology of the Nineteenth – Early Twentieth Centuries: Imperial Race, Colonial Other, Degenerate Types, and the Russian Racial Body', in *Empire Speaks Out: Languages of Rationalization and Self-Description in the Russian Empire*, ed. by Ilya Gerasimov, Jan Kusber, and Alexander Semyonov (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009), pp. 155–90; Charles Steinwedel, 'To Make a Difference: The Category of Ethnicity in Late Imperial Russian Politics 1861–1917', in *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge and Practices, 1800–1950*, ed. by David Hoffmann and Yanni Kotsonis (London; New York: Springer, 2000), pp. 67–86; Francine Hirsch, 'Race without the Practice of Racial Politics', *Slavic Review*, 61.1 (2002), 30–43; Charles Steinwedel, 'Making Social Groups, One Person at a Time: The Identification of Individuals by Estate, Religious Confession, and Ethnicity in Late Imperial Russia', in *Documenting Individual Identity: The Development of State Practices in the Modern World*, ed. by John C. Torpey and Jane Caplan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 67–82; Juliette Cadiot, 'Searching for Nationality: Statistics and National Categories at the End of the Russian Empire

positions were complemented when, at the end of the 19th century, the name of Siberia was phased out from the administrative language in favour of the overarching name of Asiatic Russia (*Aziatskaia Rossiia*), which carried the overtones necessary for establishing a colonial difference while curtailing the formation of a Siberian political unity.²²

This document also brings forth questions about the distribution of administrative positions according to different levels of education. Although we do not know the individual position that these officials occupied within the imperial hierarchy, it can be inferred that most of the higher educated cohort was part of the upper echelons of imperial administration, as they fulfilled the educational profiles needed to access those positions. At the same time, it is possible to see that this upper cohort came mainly from the European Russian regions of the empire, suggesting that, for the years in question at least, higher imperial administration in Tomsk was run by individuals who were not originally born in Siberia.

The almost total lack of Siberian participation in the higher echelons of imperial administration rests in the government's reluctance to recruit higher officials from taxed populations, leaving nobles and the church *soslovie* as the only acceptable choices for staffing the upper bureaucracy. Given the fact that in Siberia there was virtually no landed nobility,²³ in contrast with their omnipresence in the European sections of the empire, there were simply no local nobles to recruit for civil service cadres. Moreover, Karchaeva et al have shown in their study of eastern Siberian administration that during the second half of the 19th century, officials' upward mobility within the bureaucratic hierarchy was limited in comparison with the European section of the empire.²⁴ This all added to the dominance of European Russians in the administration, as locally-educated individuals who had the educational level to aspire to higher positions in bureaucracy had no

(1897–1917)', *The Russian Review*, 64.3 (2005), 440–55; Catherine B. Clay, 'Russian Ethnographers in the Service of Empire, 1856-1862', *Slavic Review*, 54.1 (1995), 45–61; Nathaniel Knight, 'Science, Empire, and Nationality: Ethnography in the Russian Geographical Society, 1845–1855', in *Imperial Russia: New Histories for the Empire*, ed. by Jane Burbank and David L. Ransel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), pp. 108–41.

²² Willard Sunderland, 'The Ministry of Asiatic Russia: The Colonial Office That Never Was but Might Have Been', *Slavic Review*, 69.1 (2010). See also Remnev, 'Siberia and the Russian Far East', pp. 439–40.

²³ Additionally, until 1888 there were no higher education institutions that could train individuals from the clergy to occupy higher positions in the administration, and even when it was founded, it only consisted of one faculty, which still maintained Siberians dependency on European Russian higher education.

²⁴ Tat'iana Karchaeva, Denis Gergilev, and Mikhail Sever'ianov, 'Kto oni – "pis'movoditeli" v Sibiri?', *Bylye Gody*, 43.1 (2017), p. 90.

incentives to remain in Siberia.²⁵ Therefore, the central government relied heavily on the non-taxpaying population from elsewhere in the empire for manning the top posts.²⁶

The aggregated results of this data, as shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**Figure 3, also suggest that as the level of education required for a post in the imperial bureaucracy goes down, the number and proportion of Siberians involved in the administration grows, a trend that can be partly explained by the late foundation of a university in Siberia. The University of Tomsk, the first in the region, was only set up in 1888 and, as the Siberian regionalist and topographer Nikolaï I. Potanin argued in an essay about Siberia's urban landscape, before the university's existence 'all young people left to complete their education in European Russia,'²⁷ a situation that affected the development of a civil life in the region. For this reason, it is possible to identify an increasing presence of Siberian-born officials in middle-range posts after the foundation of the University of Tomsk, and slightly more than three quarters in the lower administration positions in Tomsk in 1890s. As Karchaeva et al. showed for late 19th century Krasnoiarsk, middle-range positions were occupied by more and more Siberians as education grew in the region, while lower positions were almost entirely manned by locals throughout the 19th century.²⁸

Despite the fact that the university increased the number of locally educated Siberians, it is possible to find evidence that the imperial administration continued to prefer to rely on officials coming from European Russia over Siberians in top bureaucratic positions. An 1897 survey of the Tobol'sk province in western Siberia, which described administrative and economic aspects of the region's development during that year, stated that all the candidates being considered for high positions in the judicial chambers were coming from European Russia. The only distinction among them was whether they had previously served in the region before or were first timers in Siberian administration.²⁹

²⁵ See Laurie Manchester, *Holy Fathers, Secular Sons: Clergy, Intelligentsia, and the Modern Self in Revolutionary Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011), pp. 160–65. See also Watrous, *Russia's 'Land of the Future'*, p. 32., who discusses the problem of 'intellectual absenteeism' affecting Siberia from the 19th to the 20th centuries. For further discussion, see Chapter 4.

²⁶ See Tat'iana Karchaeva, Denis Gergilev, and Mikhail Sever'ianov, 'Kto oni – "pis'movoditeli" v Sibiri?.'

²⁷ G. N. Potanin, 'Goroda Sibiri', in *Sibir': eë sovremennoe sostoiane i eë nuzhdy, sbornik stateĭ*, ed. by I. S. Mel'nik (St. Petersburg: Izdanie A. F. Devriena, 1908), p. 249.

²⁸ In fact, they state that the proportion of middle range Siberian officers grew during the nineteenth century from 15% in 1823 to 52% in 1865, and to 62% in 1915, while lower positions were occupied by Siberians in this sequence: 50% in 1823, 73% in 1865, and 93% in 1915. See Karchaeva, Gergilev, and Sever'ianov, 'Kto oni – "pis'movoditeli" v Sibiri?', p. 88.

²⁹ *Staticheskiĭ obzor Tobol'skoĭ gubernii za 1897 g.* (Tobol'sk: Tipografiia gubernskogo upravleniia, 1898), pp. 40–41.

The cleavage in geographical origins existing within the administration played out in our initial case study. Zhulebin, the city chief, and also Bogoliudov, Kaimanakov and Bekbulatov were all part of the new middle and lower range of imperial officials born in Siberia. As Biisk's city chief, Zhulebin was the highest ranked bureaucrat, but in officials' provincial hierarchies this meant being a middle-range bureaucrat of Siberian origin.³⁰ Their counterpart – that is, the overseeing body of the Provincial Board – was, on the other hand, comprised of metropolitan authorities that regulated administrative performance in the region, a distinction which illustrates the importance of establishing the origins of the administrative structure in colonial contexts. It reflects what Quijano recognises as one of the pillars that sustain colonial landscapes, as 'both race and the division of labour remained structurally linked and mutually reinforcing, in spite of the fact that neither of them were necessarily dependent on the other in order to exist or change'.³¹

Conclusions on the composition of imperial administration in the region can enable an interrogation of the cohesiveness of the imperial structures in Tomsk, as this difference in background reinforced divisions within the administrative body. As discussed in the previous chapter, the self-government reforms of the 1860s were considered a self-defeating measure since the inexistence of a nobility identified with the imperial cause would mean the transferral of power to the local *intelligentsiia* and a free peasantry, without any noble check on their exercise of power, something considered especially risky after the Siberian regionalist affair.³² However, apart from the political consequences of their implementation in European Russia, the presence of *zemstva* had created a denser network of administrative institutions that spread access to educational institutions, culture and healthcare towards the rural communities. In Siberia, as Potanin noted in 1908, 'all the intellectual and cultural life is limited to the cities',³³ due to the absence of societal institutions. Therefore, the presence of an administrative elite with strong ties to the autocracy was an essential feature in the maintenance of metropolitan power.

³⁰ *Adres-kalendar' Zapadnoi Sibiri na 1875 god chast' II* (Omsk: Tipografiia G. Sungurovoï, 1875), p. 152; *Adres-kalendar' Zapadnoi Sibiri za 1879 god, chast' vtoraiia* (Omsk: Tipografiia Akm. obl. pravleniia, 1879), pp. 151–53.

³¹ Quijano, 'Coloniality of Power', p. 184.

³² Peter Gatrell, 'Ethnicity and Empire in Russia's Borderland History', *The Historical Journal*, 38.03 (1995), 715–27 (p. 718).

³³ Potanin, 'Goroda Sibiri', p. 234.

Administrative Stagnation: Keeping Control over Siberia's Administration

Gustav Khristianovich Gasford, who was Governor-general of western Siberia between 1851 and 1861, possessed precisely these kinds of ties to the imperial centre. Born into the nobility of the Polish Kingdom, he was educated within the imperial army. As such, he served in different regions of the empire until the emperor appointed him as the highest military and civic official in western Siberia. After a decade of service in this role, he returned to St. Petersburg to a seat in the State Council.³⁴

As mentioned before, one of the Governor-general's duties was to send annual reports to the tsar detailing the economic, social, cultural, and administrative conditions of the territory under his command. In his 1852 report, Gasford refers to one of the features that allow us to understand the division within Siberian administration and discern the mechanisms that consolidated it through the second half of the 19th century. Talking about the challenge of improving administrative structures in Siberia, he mentioned the need to consider 'incentives to officials coming from higher educational institutions to serve in western Siberia'.³⁵ What Gasford is referring to is one of Siberian bureaucracy's special characteristics: the existence of a 'system of benefits and privileges that were legislatively formalised by the provision "On the benefits of service in the provinces and regions of Siberia, the Caucasus and Transcaucasia" of May 25, 1835' which explained the prevalence of European Russians in the higher echelons of Tomsk's and Siberian, administrative structures.³⁶ Under these rules, Russians coming from west of the Urals received higher salaries than they would serving in the European core of the empire. These benefits also translated into pension fund rewards that added years of service to their records.

This policy had been designed as a way of dealing with the dearth of metropolitan-educated individuals that were willing to take civil service positions in Siberia. However, it also had the opposite effect of making a career in the civil service an unachievable prospect for educated Siberians, as the provision clearly stated that Siberians could not

³⁴ Irina L. Dameshek and Lev M. Dameshek, 'General-gubernatorskii korpus Sibiri: sotsial'nyi portret', *Vestnik tomского gosudarstvennogo universiteta: istoriia*, 5, 2014, 4–11.

³⁵ RGIA, f. 1265, op. 13, d. 2a, l. 79. 'Otchët po upravleniiu zapadnoi sibirii za 1852 god.'

³⁶ Evgeniĭ Aleksandrovich S'emshchikov, 'Gosudarstvennaia grazhdanskaia sluzhba v Sibiri v XIX veka: osobennosti struktury i kadrovogo obespecheniia', *Gumanitarnye issledovaniia v vostochnoi Sibiri i na dal'nem vostokey*, 4 (2016), 47–53 (p. 51).

be beneficiaries unless they had spent ten years continually living elsewhere.³⁷ Furthermore, the benefits that attracted European Russians to Siberia reduced the vacancies available in the bureaucracy for educated locals, further preventing their promotion up the ranks of Siberian bureaucracy. In this sense, the system of privileges that benefited Russian Europeans was part of the mechanisms that kept the province, and the whole of Siberia, under metropolitan leadership.

Additionally, the divide between metropolitan and local officials was supported by the limited upward mobility that existed in Siberia in comparison with European Russia.³⁸ As such, administrative stagnation can be understood by the analysis of the repeated denunciation of officials' misuse of administrative tools, as Zhulebin's case illustrated at the beginning of this chapter. Administrative misconduct and endemic underperformance have long pervaded scholarship about Russian imperial administration.³⁹ Similarly, examples of the long history of Siberian administrative corruption and the pervasiveness of the perceived underperformance of imperial administration in Siberia becomes evident when looking at the long lists of complaints gathered in State Historical Archive of Tomsk (GATO). The activities of the *gubernskoe pravlenie*, which represented the main body of metropolitan supervision over regional governance, were largely related to dealing with the various charges and allegations made against rank-and-file officials throughout the region. The Provincial Board – composed of the sovereign's appointed governor, the vice-governor and the heads of main administrative divisions and thus representing the metropolitan bureaucratic elite in the region – oversaw the application of decrees and laws ensuring that the governmental

³⁷ Alekseĭ V. Palin, 'Tomskoe gubernskoe upravlenie (1895–1917 gg.): struktura, kompetentsiia, administratsiia' (Kemerovskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2004), p. 23.

³⁸ Karchaeva, Gergilev, and Sever'ianov, 'Kto oni – "pis'movoditeli" v Sibiri?'

³⁹ Scholarship pointing out the widespread existence of corruption and arbitrariness in Russian imperial administration is quite extensive. See for example Hans J. Torke, 'Continuity and Change in the Relations between Bureaucracy and Society in Russia, 1613–1861', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 5.4 (1971), 457–76; Richard G. Robbins, *Tsar's Viceroy: Russian Provincial Governors in the Last Years of the Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987); Marc Raeff, 'The Russian Autocracy and Its Officials', in *Russian Thought and Politics*, Harvard Slavic Studies (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), IV, 74–91; Marc Raeff, *Siberia and the Reforms of 1822* (University of Washington Press, 1956). More recently, and relating to the Siberian case, see Daniel Beer, 'Penal Deportation to Siberia and the Limits of State Power, 1801–81', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 16.3 (2015), 621–650; Andrew A. Gentes, *Exile to Siberia, 1590–1822: Corporeal Commodification and Administrative Systematization in Russia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Sarah Badcock, *A Prison Without Walls? Eastern Siberian Exile in the Last Years of Tsarism* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Jeffrey S. Hardy, 'Chaos in Siberia', *Sibirica*, 17.2 (2018), 94–113, who have argued similarly regarding state administration of the exile system.

apparatus functioned appropriately. It was therefore constantly opening new cases against lower rank officials who, in some way or another, had neglected their duties.

Cases with similar characteristics are abundant in the files of the Provincial Board in Tomsk. In the year 1858 alone, a document produced by Tomsk's administration listed more than a hundred cases of prosecutions against officials, the majority of which ended up without convictions,⁴⁰ creating the image of a province immersed in administrative chaos.⁴¹ Matkhanova has argued that throughout the period under study 'leaders of the Siberian administration tried to convince the central authorities of the need to take drastic measures to improve the personnel of the administrative apparatus'.⁴² Governors' annual reports attest to this as they frequently mention that the state of paperwork for different procedures was always behind schedule and that there was a need for more educated and conscientious officials. Governor Tikhon Fedotovitch Prokofiev, for example, in his annual report for the year 1854, mentioned two separate types of problems with officials in his province. He declared that there was 'unsatisfactory legal reporting from District Courts in Tobol'sk and Tiumen' as well as faulty reporting from Urban Dumas on financial issues that already received attention from provincial authorities, who are taking the measures to improve and fix the problem'.⁴³

Eight years later, a circular was sent from St. Petersburg, at the request of Tomsk's Provincial Board, about problems in the management of the prison population in Tomsk. It demanded that officials should act to avoid further delays in the processing of convicted individuals and urged all 'officials responsible for reporting on the cases of the convicts to use all their resources and take all measures in their capacity, for the speedy production of documents for prisoners' deliveries, bringing to an end the situation of these deceitful

⁴⁰ GATO, f. 3, op. 2, d. 661, l. 42, 'Vedomosti, sostavlennye v Tomskom gubernskom pravlenii, Kuznetskoï ratushhe o kolichestve vakantnykh mest, chislennosti chinovnikov, sostoïashchikh pod sudom, zanimaiushchikh klassnye dolzhnosti v uchrezhdeniiakh'. See also 'Delo ob uvolnenii sekretaria Marinskogo okružnogo politseïnskogo upravleniia' (GATO, f. 3, op. 2, d. 2495, ll. 10–10 ob.), and 'Delo o provedenii rassledovaniia po faktu prevysheniia sluzhebnykh polnomochiï Kuznetskim okružnym ispravnikom Tiushhevym.' (GATO, f. 3, op. 2, d. 1540).

⁴¹ See also 'Delo po obvineniiu Zmeinogorskogo politseïnskogo nadziratel'ia.' (GATO, f. 3, op. 2, d. 2947, l. 6 ob.), about the case of a local official, Chagovets. It was requested that this case of extortion be postponed and dismissed to prioritise the appointment of a new police officer and that Chagovets be transferred to another locality.

⁴² Natal'ia P. Matkhanova, 'Popytki bor'by so vziatocnicestvom chinovnikov v Sibiri XIX veka', *International Journal of Russian Studies*, 2, 2013, p. 209.

⁴³ Rossiskii gosudarstvennii istoricheskii arkhiv (RGIA), f. 1265 (Vtoroi Sibirskii komitet), op. 4, d. 114, l. 38 ob. 'Delo vtorogo Sibirskogo komiteta soderzhashchee kopiiu otchëta nachal'nika Tobol'skoï gubernii o sostoianii etoi gubernii za 1854 god.'

District Attorneys at the appointed time, and not after the end of their term'.⁴⁴ It carried on to affirm that police officers, the district court clerks and Tomsk officers who did not comply with these indications and were found guilty, would meet 'all the strictness of the laws'.⁴⁵ In another circular from the capital, with the emperor's approval, it was said that 'even under the most intensified activity of provincial supervision, and despite the repeated orders of the Provincial Board, Police Investigators are completely indifferent to the exact performance of their duties, even in such cases in which the implicated people are still held in custody. Their production of documents about prisoners is extremely untimely'.⁴⁶

Examples of officials being disciplined for breaching administrative procedures were numerous in Tomsk's administration, as Matkhanova argues.⁴⁷ The archives are filled with denunciations of officials' arbitrariness made by Siberian subjects which end up being considered subject to internal legal procedures rather than providing the chance for affected individuals to seek reparations. Such is the case with a document dated from December 1867, which registered a complaint made by the Urtam peasant community to the head of the Provincial Board and Tomsk Governor German Gustavovich Lerkhe, an official who had already acquired notoriety in the province for his complicity in the arrests of *sibiriaki* activists in the early 1860s. The letter he received stated that the head of the Urtam rural settlement I. M. Zubov had, in 1865, abused his powers by resolving a conflict with the local peasant Romashov by sentencing him to be whipped without legal procedure. In his defence, Zubov and his local clerk V. Martynov argued that the measures had been motivated by the utter loss of respect for the authorities in the locality, which had nurtured unrest among the local peasantry. In fact, Zubov continued to argue, during an argument in the presence of a group of peasants in Urtam, he was forced to hit Romashov in the face; to Zubov's astonishment, Romashov angrily returned the blow. As a result, Zubov arrested Romashov and arbitrarily decreed that Romashov be punished by whipping, skipping the formal legal process.⁴⁸ The issue remained without resolution for a decade, when in 1877, according to a letter sent to the Governor, the police 'decided to

⁴⁴ 'Delo ob izmeneniakh v sisteme nakazaniia za ugovovnye i administrativnye pravonarusheniia.' (GATO, f. 3, op. 2, d. 1026, l. 9.)

⁴⁵ GATO, f. 3, op. 2, d. 1026, l. 9.

⁴⁶ GATO, f. 3, op. 2, d. 1026, l. 10.

⁴⁷ Matkhanova, 'Popytki Bor'by'.

⁴⁸ 'Delo o provedenii rassledovaniia po faktu prevysheniia sluzhebnykh polnomochii Urtamskim volostnym golovoï I.M. Zubovym i pisarem V. Martynovym.' (GATO, f. 3, op. 2, d. 1245, ll. 4–4ob.)

resolve the measures for the speedy end of the case of the abuses of Urtam district head Zubov and the scribe Martynov,⁴⁹ which ended in the case being dismissed.

The nature of relations between lower bureaucrats in the localities and local peasantry seems, in this case, to be pervaded by the need to apply measures that fell outside the existing legal framework. Zubov and Martynov excused their behaviour by pointing to the necessity to solve what they saw as rebellious activities that threatened local order and stability. As Burbank has argued, the rudimentary development of administrative procedures managing relations between officials and subjects and within different levels of bureaucratic hierarchies ‘meant that little stood in the way of functionaries’ use of their powers in flexible and personal ways’.⁵⁰ By acting illegally, they were acting in the interest of empire, enforcing the order needed to keep the administration of Urtam uneventful. Their solutions fell outside the very legal framework they were protecting; however, they prioritised the solution of a pressing problem, rather than the correct application of law. Nevertheless, it was not the unfair treatment suffered by Romashov that was prosecuted, indicating that it was not the defence of the weak elements of society that motivated the Provincial Board’s decision to prosecute. The officials were tried for not respecting legal procedures and for undermining the idealised image of a rationalised state, rather than for their arbitrary use of power (*proizvol*).⁵¹ The surviving legal records and the comments of clerks in the local paperwork reveal that lawful procedures took a disproportionate amount of time, rendering administrative resolutions a futile exercise which only created more unresolved cases and further administrative chaos within the wider imperial administration of Tomsk.⁵²

These issues are also manifested in a case from the town of Narym in which an appeal to the higher bureaucracy – the Provincial Board – did not produce any tangible result other than the accumulation of cases against lower bureaucrats who went unpunished. In October 1884, the urban дума of Narym wrote a letter to the governor stating that in 1880, the official in charge of the city, Kornil Alexandrovich Nesterov,

⁴⁹ GATO, f. 3, op. 2, d. 1245, l. 42.

⁵⁰ Burbank, ‘An Imperial Rights Regime’, p. 417.

⁵¹ See Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter, ‘Russian Legal Culture and the Rule of Law’, *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 7.1 (2006), 61–70; Jonathan W. Daly, ‘On the Significance of Emergency Legislation in Late Imperial Russia’, *Slavic Review*, 54.3 (1995), 602–29; Pëtr Andreevich Zaionchkovskii, *Krizis samoderzhavii na rubezhe 1870–1880-kh godov*. (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1964).

⁵² Indeed, claims made against the slow resolution of cases is mentioned in various letters sent to the Provincial Board. See ‘Delo o rassmotrenii zhalob grazhdan na krazhi, izbineniia, nezakonnnye aresty.’ (GATO, f. 3, op. 2, d. 1995, ll. 235–236, 251, 658, 768, 909.)

took 200 roubles illegally from the administration. They also declared that measures be immediately taken to claim back the money and punish Nesterov. Investigations ensued, directed by Korshunov, the commissioner of the fifth section of the Tomsk district administration. However, the town community claimed Nesterov and Korshunov were in cahoots as the latter's investigation only reclaimed 15 roubles out of the two hundred. This was brought to the governor's attention when the results of the investigation were appealed, but the parties involved were 'notified that the correspondence and books of the arrival and expenditure of money sums brought by Nesterov had been burnt in a fire on December 15, 1883'.⁵³ The mysterious fire engulfed all the evidence and allowed Nesterov to go without punishment.

The tolerance of malpractice shown in these cases sometimes led to the wider realization that the people occupying official positions were far from ideally suited to their jobs. In those cases their superiors had to acknowledge that they could not hope for better administrative performance when officials' education did not match the workload being assigned to them. German Avgustovich Tobizen, a St. Petersburg-born aristocrat who was Tomsk's governor between 1890 and 1902, expressed this feeling in an 1891 letter to the central authorities. Referring to police officers in Tomsk, he stated that:

At the same time, I consider it necessary to draw your attention to the fact that the situation in which the officials of the Tomsk City Police found themselves and the salaries they receive are so insignificant that none of the educated and worthy people are attracted, only people who need a piece of daily bread. And at the earliest opportunity they, at least the more capable and active ones who provide useful services, leave and go to other departments or to private positions.⁵⁴

In Tobizen's account, tolerance and understanding towards police officers' misconduct was required in light of their inferior position, which naturalised their behaviour, something that was inscribed in the structural allocation of functions within the imperial administration. The differences that constructed imperial administration in Siberia can be seen in the denunciations of inefficiency, of a lack of care for the empire's business and of tolerance towards administrators' wrongdoings, which were ultimately excused by the miserable conditions of their existence, as will be explored in the final section of this chapter. The colonised individuals in the administration were seen as being

⁵³ GATO, f. 3, op. 2, d. 1995, l. 98 ob.

⁵⁴ GATO, f. 3, op. 2, d. 3237, ll. 3 ob.-4.

fundamentally different to their metropolitan overseers. In the view of the upper bureaucracy in Siberia, ‘the contrast between geographical proximity and cultural distance could not have been stronger’.⁵⁵

The recurrence of cases like these can be explained from a colonial point of view. Following Jonathan Saha’s work on colonial Burma, I argue that by bringing attention to the great number of ‘misconduct investigations [against local bureaucrats], the upper echelons of the regime were imagining an ideal colonial state which was rational and impersonal’.⁵⁶ However, the existence of this chaotic picture in Siberian administration was not regarded as a threat to colonial governance by the bureaucratic elite. Instead ‘far from undermining the ideal state, [misconduct] was used to justify the racial division of the colonial state’.⁵⁷ Echoing this line of thought, I argue that the arbitrariness that was constantly being denounced by high imperial authorities in Siberia as a recurrent practice of middle and lower bureaucrats, can be read differently in the case of Tomsk’s administration. Moreover, these conclusions can be expanded to understand colonial governance in Siberia during the second half of the 19th century. In this sense, the formalistic and idealised approach towards the law, as it was practiced by higher bureaucrats in Siberian imperial administration, can be understood as a strategy for maintaining its territories while retaining the difference needed in a colonial setting, as imperial domination ‘is exercised through difference, rather than through integration or assimilation’.⁵⁸

Understanding Siberian Misconduct

Administrative disorder, this chapter argues, was not an undesired by-product of colonial administration. On the contrary, it can be interpreted as a goal of a metropolitan policy which has as its main priority the maintenance of the difference of the ruling group. As Saha has pointed out in the British case, lower bureaucrats’ ‘corrupt applications of the law were not only transgressions of the British ideals of the rule of law; they were also what law was’.⁵⁹ This can be applied to Siberia if we understand that

⁵⁵ Etkind, *Internal Colonization*, p. 109.

⁵⁶ Jonathan Saha, *Law, Disorder and the Colonial State: Corruption in Burma c.1900* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 8.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁵⁸ Kivelson and Suny, *Russia’s Empires*, p. 4.

⁵⁹ Jonathan Saha, ‘A Mockery of Justice? Colonial Law, the Everyday State and Village Politics in the Burma Delta, c.1890–1910’, *Past & Present*, 217.1 (2012), 187–212 (p. 191).

the binary opposition that creates the exclusionary terms of legal and illegal within a state system ‘are not opposites excluding one another but rather two dimensions of a whole co-joined in an ambivalent relationship’.⁶⁰ It is in this sense that the disorderly picture of imperial administration does not create thinner imperial control or dismiss the imperial nature of a given colonial situation, adding to the ambiguous character of a supposedly colonial territory, as had been the case with Siberia’s position within the empire. On the contrary, the legal framework imposed and the administrative chaos that ensued, were often part of a more complex mechanism through which the colonisers justified their presence, as colonised peoples show ‘a lack of potential for separate existence’⁶¹ which exacerbates their constant state of becoming. In this sense, the chaotic nature of governance in Siberia was not the result of a lack of imperial power in the region. Instead, as Saha has argued in his study, ‘it might be said that the disorder [...] had a symbiotic relationship with legal state power,’⁶² and was the mechanism that enabled the divide within Siberian imperial administration.

In this sense, Zhulebin’s case, and others I have analysed thus far, present the image of a Siberian administration trapped in a vicious circle. The constant need to improve the quality of officials, while augmenting their quantity, was never achieved because local candidates were deterred by the limited prospects of upward mobility within the bureaucratic hierarchy and the material implications of the substantial difference in wages between upper, middle and lower officials.⁶³ This in turn meant that educated Siberians would usually prefer to pursue careers in the central provinces of the empire, perpetuating the quality and quantity issues affecting local administration. Misconduct and inefficiency were therefore perpetuated even once they had been recognized as issues which threatened the order that produced them.

All this can be better understood by looking at the framework within which the administration operated, a structure which enabled the emergence of practices that subverted the very order the empire wished to maintain. In Jorg Baberowski’s view, the legal system under which the government ruled facilitated its evasion by promoting a

⁶⁰ Gerhard Anders, *Corruption and the Secret of Law: A Legal Anthropological Perspective*, ed. by Monique Nuijten (Farnham: Routledge, 2009), p. 12.

⁶¹ Anna Fournier, ‘Mapping Identities: Russian Resistance to Linguistic Ukrainisation in Central and Eastern Ukraine’, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 54.3 (2002), 417.

⁶² Saha, *Law, Disorder and the Colonial State*, p. 2.

⁶³ See Iurii Mikhaïlovich Goncharov, ‘Material’noe polozhenie chinovnichestva Sibiri vo vtoroi polovine XIX – nachale XX vv.’, *Izvestiia altaïskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, 4, 2002, 20–28 (p. 20); See Dameshek, ‘Chinovnichestvo kak “vysshii klass”’, p. 51.

legitimacy that rested upon Enlightenment ideals which did not resonate with the people it was governing. In his view, Russia in the second half of the 19th century was experiencing another dimension of the cultural dualism that alienated the elites from the common subjects in Russia. This legal dualism was based on logics that differed fundamentally from peasants' understanding of the goal of justice itself: 'The state laws, to them, expressed an understanding of conflict resolution of a strange world to which they did not want to submit. The law of the peasants was personalised, not abstract; it referred to the morals, not to the deeds, of the perpetrator'.⁶⁴ Frierson has argued that the goal of peasant justice differed fundamentally from the standardised version of justice that authorities wished to promote after the 1860s reforms, a reality confirmed in her opinion by the existence of *samosud*, or peasants' ability to solve conflicts without recourse to official channels.⁶⁵

The idealised and formalistic approach towards procedures that imperial authorities were quick to protect and uphold was the cause of unfair administrative decisions on many occasions, as an 1891 article in *Vostochnoe obozrenie* on the state of peasant courts in Siberia explained. In it, the author argued that authorities' intention to make the 'written law' take precedence over 'customary law' in the dispensing of justice in *volost'*⁶⁶ courts, created situations in which:

The *volost'* clerk (assuming a complete absence of malicious intent on his part) explains the law to the judges who, after hearing a whole series of articles – mostly irrelevant to the case and understanding only a few words – come to unjust and consequently lawless decisions, but solely because they were based on the written law.⁶⁷

In this interpretation, a bureaucratic official was forced to submit to a practice which had no resonance with the particularities of peasant life in Siberia, but that would

⁶⁴ Jorg Baberowski, 'Law, the Judicial System and the Legal Profession', in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, ed. by Dominic Lieven (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), II, 344–68 (p. 351).

⁶⁵ See Cathy A. Frierson, 'Crime and Punishment in the Russian Village: Rural Concepts of Criminality at the End of the Nineteenth Century', *Slavic Review*, 46.1 (1987), 55–69; See also Cathy A. Frierson, "'I Must Always Answer to the Law...'" Rules and Responses in the Reformed Volost' Court', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 75.2 (1997), 308–34.

⁶⁶ The lowest judicial instance, available to peasants for conflict resolution. It was composed of elected peasants from the community – who were usually illiterate – acting as judges, who were assisted by scribes (*pisaria*) that came from the bureaucratic institutions and therefore were literate and normally influential in the decisions made.

⁶⁷ 'Odna iz neotlozhneishikh nuzhd Sibirskoi derevni', *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, 3 November 1891, pp. 8–10 (p. 9).

prevent possible disciplinary measures against himself. In the official's mind, if his worst fears were realised, he could always protect himself using the paper trail that showed his reliance on the written law. As Popkins has argued, many aspects of rural life were not present in the legal codes provided by authorities. Officials' reliance on the written law would therefore guard them from superiors' enquiries in the case of appeals.⁶⁸ In addition, peasants were encouraged to reach decisions that fell outside their contingent needs, which had the effect of discrediting, in the peasants' eyes, a justice system that produced verdicts that were incomprehensible and based in laws that did not speak to their customs. In situations when officials wished to protect the community from unjustified rulings, they themselves risked punishments, as the Siberian peasant Nikolaï M. Chukmaldin recalled when describing the judicial system in his native town of Kulakovo. He remembered that by 'protecting the rural community and its weak members, they themselves fell under administrative penalties and suffered great damage in their households'.⁶⁹

Another example of the existing disjunction in the legal system is identified by Baberowski in the logic of punishment that the state applied in resolving conflicts between individuals. In his opinion, this perspective clashed with the compensation criterion that prevailed among the lower strata of Russian society, who ultimately prioritised the reinsertion into society of the perpetrator of any crime as the main goal because 'who in the community [...] really had an interest in throwing indispensable workers into prison?'⁷⁰ The practice of pre-trial detention of defendants in Siberian peasants courts before and after the reforms applied in 1885,⁷¹ was a cause of complaints, as denounced in the Siberian newspaper *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, since the 'weight falls on the peasants' society to which they belong, because it meant a lower number of suitable workers'.⁷² For these reasons, it was common that the legal system was seen as a tool that needed to be manipulated in order to accommodate it to the needs of the community.

⁶⁸ See Gareth Popkins, 'Code versus Custom? Norms and Tactics in Peasant Volost Court Appeals, 1889–1917', *The Russian Review*, 59.3 (2000), 408–24.

⁶⁹ Chukmaldin Nikolaï M., *Moï vospominaniia: izbrannye proizvedeniia* (Tiumen': Soft disain, 1997), pp. 63–64.

⁷⁰ Baberowski, 'Law, the Judicial System and the Legal Profession', p. 352. See also Christine D. Worobec, 'Horse Thieves and Peasant Justice in Post-Emancipation Imperial Russia', *Journal of Social History*, 21.2 (1987), 281–93.

⁷¹ The reforms to the court system in Siberia in 1885 introduced a limited version of the reforms applied in European Russia in 1865.

⁷² 'Korrespondentsiia, 1888 3 iiulia', *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, 3 July 1888, pp. 4–6 (p. 6).

Practical accommodation like this often entailed stepping into illegal territory, which clashed with the legalistic approach taken by the overseeing bodies of government, as can be seen in the case with which I opened this chapter: Zhulebin was ultimately prosecuted for opening a procedure in an illegal manner, even if there were serious accusations that could not be ignored. Nevertheless, the precarity upon which the activities of officials in local settings rested, and the lack of support from central administration, meant that ‘the goals of public welfare and well-ordered government rendered arbitrary personal rule as much of a necessity as a source of abuse and illicit individual gain’.⁷³ It was the pressing day-to-day needs of adapting administrative behaviour to existing conditions, rather than the limits of legal procedure, that was the most recognisable reality for those involved in the governance in imperial Russia. As the memoirs of Governor Stremoukhov show, transgressing the inscribed boundaries of legal activity was a regular part of administrative procedures. In his words:

For a long time, the police were the object of public censure, but this was a great injustice. These men served zealously and conscientiously for a mere pittance. And if they were guilty of taking bribes, these were insignificant. The government was more to blame for not supporting its employees than were the latter, who found it difficult to live on the salary they were given. Extortion or criminal acts for money were rare; accepting appreciations of thanks for the swift dispatch of legal business was much more common.⁷⁴

Besides the moral approval Stremoukhov gives to the existence of these irregular methods, it is interesting to note how he recognised that illegal means were in some ways engendered by the legal framework upon which the Russian system operated. The arbitrariness that existed in imperial administration in Siberia was tempered by contextual or *sui generis* processes that helped maintain the course of administration. The particularities of Tomsk, and indeed Siberia’s, administration shaped the development of these irregularities. As Palin has argued, an important aspect of the framework under

⁷³ Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter, *Social Identity in Imperial Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2015), p. 42.

⁷⁴ Pëtr P. Stremoukhov, ‘The Administrative Structure of Imperial Russia: A Governor’s Perspective’, *Russian Studies in History*, 53.3 (2014), 7–29 (p. 25). See also, ‘Perepiska s Tomskim gubernskim prokurorom, tomskim politsmeisterom o prevyshenii sluzhebnykh polnomochii Tomskim okruzhnym sud’ei P.I. Frizelem’ (GATO, f. 3, op. 2, d. 3237, ll. 3–4 ob.), in which the Governor of Tomsk, Tobizen, sends a letter to the procurator of the court asking him to protect lower and middle ranking police officers from abusive language in court, as ‘they receive insignificant rewards for their work, [so they deserve to] at least receive satisfaction from dignified treatment.’

which Siberian officials worked had to do with the fact that Siberian provincial officials were responsible for a number of tasks that ‘in the European provinces of Russia were carried out by *zemstva* institutions,’⁷⁵ ministerial agencies and bureaucratic structures, which implied that purely bureaucratic administrations carried a heavier administrative burden than their counterparts on the other side of the Urals.

By resorting to these arguments to explain the existing notion of a chaotic and disorganised imperial rule over Siberia, I am here arguing for an understanding of the disorderly state of bureaucracy as stemming not from the malicious use of law by local imperial agents, or as an essential feature of Siberians’ use of power, nor as a manifestation of the relative freedom that officials enjoyed east of the Urals because of lack of central oversight. On the contrary, I argue that arbitrary rule, abuse and the solving of issues outside legal norms were a necessity that was imposed by the very legal and administrative frameworks upon which the imperial administration rested. As John Comaroff has argued, colonial ‘law [w]as an instrument of imperial domination; this even when its counterinsurgent potentialities are recognized’.⁷⁶ So, although it did give way to resistance, accommodation and reinterpretations from the people that were subjugated by them – a weapons-of-the-weak approach that could help in explaining officials’ pervasive misconducts – it was still an instrument designed to bind populations to its logics.

Following this line of thought, widespread corruption and the existence of arbitrariness in Siberia’s bureaucracy was not the result of a lack of central oversight, nor was it necessarily to do with a concerted effort by Siberians who used their agency to subvert the imperial order. On the contrary, they were the product of Russian presence in the region and can be viewed as part of ‘the subtle and hidden ways by which order constitutes disorder and by which the law already contains the possibility of its violation or desecration’.⁷⁷

I would like to suggest that the mutual constitution of disorder and imperial rule goes even further. As mentioned before, the existence of this widespread network of misconduct cannot be considered a by-product of administrative activity, but an essential part of Russian rule over the region. As Chatterjee argues when talking about colonial India, imperial administration does acquaint colonised peoples with the ruling

⁷⁵ Palin, ‘Tomsкое губернское управление’, p. 21.

⁷⁶ John L. Comaroff, ‘Colonialism, Culture, and the Law: A Foreword’, *Law & Social Inquiry*, 26.2 (2001), 305–14 (p. 309).

⁷⁷ Anders, *Corruption and the Secret of Law*, p. 12.

technologies applied by the metropolis in their own territories. However, it does so in a way that prevents those technologies from reaching their desired form ‘because the premise of its power was a rule of colonial difference, namely, the preservation of the alienness of the ruling group’.⁷⁸

As the argument goes, one of the main goals of colonial rule was to establish a difference between colonisers and colonised that maintained privileges and benefits for the former. In this sense, the Siberian context would not allow, as happened with European overseas empires, the drawing of a line that relied completely on racial difference as the main division with the subjected population. Racial difference was used as a tool for othering the indigenous population of Siberia specially when referring to north eastern *inorodtsy* as the *Iakut*. However, these distinctions stood in parallel with the creation and assignment of misconduct – rather than inferiority – to Siberian middle and lower bureaucracy, which allowed the colonial state to justify their position within a region which perpetually needed metropolitan oversight to correct itself.⁷⁹ As Jonathan Saha has argued for Burma:

Maintaining the separation of the white upper echelons of the state from indigenous society, including those in subordinate state employment, was of greater importance than maintaining a separation between the subordinate branches of the state and the rest of society. Indeed, the former division was actually reinforced by the breakdown of the latter.⁸⁰

In this light, the seemingly chaotic state of Siberian administration during the second half of the 19th century can be reinterpreted as a tool of governance, which allowed the metropolitan power to erect itself as the preserver of a semblance of order, since local officials were unable to produce stability and order within the region.

Conclusion

As this discussion of Tomsk has shown, imperial Russia’s administration of Siberia can be understood in terms of this difference, as a process of full administrative incorporation was continually thwarted in order to maintain a colonial difference that kept

⁷⁸ Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, p. 10.

⁷⁹ See Cadiot, ‘Searching for Nationality’, pp. 442–43.

⁸⁰ Jonathan Saha, *Law, Disorder and the Colonial State: Corruption in Burma c.1900* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 9.

the allocation of privileges in the hands of the imperial centre.⁸¹ This process followed a sinuous path which sometimes occluded the colonial nature of the relationship described, as the context of regionalist unrest turned the application of reforms into a topic to be handled with care throughout the period under study.

Understanding Siberian administration as the creation of a divide between a Russian European bureaucratic elite and a Siberian middle and lower bureaucracy helps us to understand that many of the dynamics described in historiography about 19th century Siberia can be reinterpreted from a colonial point of view. Rather than seeing the disorder and chaos as part of the Russian empire's lack of modernity, and therefore denying the possibility of questioning its imperial character, taking this approach allows us to unveil various methods used to create difference in imperial settings. It is in the subtle ways in which the normalising mission of the modern state remains incomplete that the colonial nature of the type of rule imposed in Siberia emerges. It would be useful also to consider that the ambiguities that a place like imperial Siberia provides are not necessarily a hindrance to the study of coloniality. Rather, they can be an advantage as they offer the possibility to address coloniality in terms of discontinuity, change and trouble, which constitute the 'key points of access to imperial logics that depend on the differential allocation of resources and rights'.⁸²

For this reason, zooming into the figure of the local bureaucrat as a liminal character which performs empire for the local population, but who also represents Siberia for the European metropolis, reveals an important ways of understanding how imperial tools of governance were put into practice, allowing for the maintenance of the bonds between the Russian core of the Russian empire and its Inner Eurasian colonies. Reinterpreting Zhulebin's, Nesterov's and Zubov's cases has allowed me to analyse the disorderly state of Siberian administration during this period as part of the mechanisms that allowed for the maintenance of the separation between Russian European and local officials during the second half of the 19th century. Although misconduct and arbitrariness were present throughout the Russian empire's bureaucracy, in this chapter I have shown that the chaotic administrative picture that reigned through the Siberian landscape had particularities that set the region apart. The separation of upper and middle bureaucracy, the system of privileges, bureaucratic stagnation and an over-burdened administration in

⁸¹ In Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*. The author mentions the concept of cultural division of labour to define differences between core and periphery and the emergence of differences between the two.

⁸² Stoler, *Duress*, p. 21.

the post-reform period all help in understanding how the empire maintained the still existing links between this region and the metropolis.

As has been shown by postcolonial theorists, colonial rule was not a monolithic figure that exerted power in a coherent and consistent way through imperial formations.⁸³ Instead, it exercised its prerogatives in chaotic and contradictory ways, accommodating interests of different sorts that helped in maintaining imperial rule unchallenged. In the same way, colonial rule deployed different mechanisms to enforce the superiority and necessity of colonial domination among local populations ruled by distant metropolitan powers. By addressing the chaotic nature of imperial governance in Siberia, it is possible to understand better how this vast expansion of land was kept under the suzerainty of the imperial house of the Romanovs, the Soviet state of the 20th century and the current Russian Federation, even after the strong regionalist movements that raged through the region both at the end of the imperial period and after the fall of the Soviet regime.⁸⁴

Educated Siberians, as seen so far, were deterred from pursuing careers in Siberian bureaucracy. However, the civic commitment we analysed in the previous chapter when discussing *zemstva* and the so called third element, also affected the local *intelligentsia*. Therefore, they sought alternative outlets in order to put into practice their desire to participate in decisions being made about Siberia. One of those spaces was the local press, and the next chapter explores the activities of these middle-men in the new communication technologies. I will argue that it was in journalistic endeavours where they found a way to express their civic commitment. Their involvement in and with the press allowed them an opportunity to dialogue with imperial authorities in a way that was inexistent within Siberia's imperial bureaucracy.

⁸³ See Stoler, McGranahan, and Perdue, *Imperial Formations; Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. by Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 1997).

⁸⁴ See Naumov, *The History of Siberia*.

Chapter 4: The Development of Siberia's Press: Public Sphere and Imperial Administration.

The profound changes affecting the Russian empire and Siberia during the second half of the 19th century, and particularly the 'thaw' in censorship regulations that came with the Great Reforms, inaugurated a period of greater possibilities for intellectuals to reflect on and debate the changes taking place throughout the empire.¹ The burgeoning journalistic outlets provided the stage for the educated public to express their views about the different layers of the Russian empire's structure and the direction Russia should take in the face of greater pressure from the neighbouring European and Asiatic imperial formations striving to assert themselves culturally and geopolitically. The educated public engaging in these debates – both in the capitals and the provinces – argued about problems that ranged from the nature of the Russian soul to electoral criteria for self-government bodies. The development of this press has produced a rich well of source material from which researchers of Russian history, located both in Russia and abroad, have drawn many insights into the ideological foundations of the revolution and the genesis of the political groups that took centre stage in the first decades of the 20th century.

This chapter engages with these intellectuals' debates during the post-reform period, looking at the development and consolidation of press outlets in Siberia and the discussions about reforms held in them, to understand how imperial bureaucracy was perceived by the local *intelligentsia*. I argue that the development of this press and the discussions held in its newspapers, especially between 1870s and 1890s, showed local intellectuals' awareness of the colonial mechanisms undergirding their relationship to the imperial centre. This awareness produced tensions among them that showed the variety of perspectives these *intelligentsy* had for understanding the place Siberia should have within the empire. Siberians' perceptions of the nature of the administrative and judicial systems, how they differed from their metropolitan counterparts, and their suggestions for improvement, reveal the tensions that existed between Siberians' urge to reform their

¹ Werner E. Mosse, *Alexander II and the Modernization of Russia* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 1992), p. 98.

local administration, in line with bureaucratic transformations taking place in European Russia, while asserting their right to adjust metropolitan reforms to suit local conditions.

The Siberian *intelligentsiia*'s belief in the printed word as the vehicle to rally support for their cause transformed privately-owned Siberian newspapers, developed from the late 1850s, into independent bodies of opinion by the late 1870s that for two decades were mainly focused on debates about the region's past, present, and future. From these outlets, local intellectuals confronted imperial authority and challenged the metropolitan policies being applied in Siberia that they thought perpetuated their region's underdevelopment and lack of autonomy. Siberians' advocacy of regional interests in the privately-owned local press could count upon the acquiescence of metropolitan authorities who, rather than using forthright censorship to control dissidence – although there were times when they did –, preferred to engage with Siberia's *intelligentsiia* by deploying state-sponsored but privately-owned newspapers that were intended to counter the influence of regionalist intellectuals. At first glance, the Russian empire's press landscape during the second half of the 19th century might appear to be split between official publications – such as *gubernskie vedomosti* – and privately founded newspapers. However, a third type existed of privately owned but state-funded newspapers. These hybrid outlets played a significant role in steering public opinion 'in directions advantageous to the state'² complementing censorship in the state's toolkit for dealing with dissident opinions.

In this publishing context, a middle space between Siberian society and the imperial bureaucracy emerged, which allowed for debates which echoed the European Russian conflictive relationship between the bureaucratic and public principles of government in imperial administration.³ However, these similar lines of debate contain particularities born from the local *intelligentsiia*'s way of perceiving Siberia's imperial bureaucracy. In a colonial context in which there was limited space for the *intelligentsiia* to engage in decision-making within their localities, the press became the space where a burgeoning, but frustrated, civil society had the opportunity to confront colonial policy. For this reason, analysing debates in Siberian newspapers allows me to address the ways in which a territorial empire, where the 'boundary between Europeans and the others was

² Rainbow, *Siberian Patriots*, p. 217.

³ See chapter 2 for discussions about the public and bureaucratic administrative structures in place in the European section of the Russian empire.

much more fluid [...], and therefore it was sometimes assumed that both could be governed by much the same institutions'⁴, created the colonial difference necessary to uphold the empire's sway over the colonial territory.

To that end, this chapter analyses the contexts in which Siberia's press originated. The first section argues that during the late 1850s and 1860s, Siberian intellectuals developed their regionalist advocacy in the pages of the state-owned provincial gazettes. However, this was stopped short after the main Siberian intellectuals were arrested in connection to the separatist affair that erupted in 1868, an episode that inaugurated a silent period in the region's journalistic development. It was only after 1875 when intellectuals got the chance to resume their activities in the press, but this time in the privately-owned newspapers, which flourished in Siberia until the 1917 Revolution. During this period an independent body of opinion emerged providing a public space free from *soslovie* and other limitations that represented a novelty in the region.⁵ The following section presents the newspapers – *Vostochnoe obozrenie* (Eastern Review) and *Sibirskii vestnik* (Siberian Herald) – which are used as case studies to analyse the divergent opinions held by local *intelligentsiia*. This section justifies this choice by analysing both newspapers' origins and people connected to their activities. Firstly, it follows the trajectory of *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, arguing that, along with other news outlets in the region, it stood for the interests of local *oblastniki*, being the paradigmatic privately-owned newspaper in the region. Secondly, it analyses *Sibirskii vestnik*, which represented what I have identified as the privately-owned but state-funded newspapers that emerged to complement censorship. On these foundations, the next section delves into the analysis of the main points of discussion between these newspapers, looking at debates about the reforms that were implemented partially, fully or omitted in the Siberian context, focusing on local intellectuals' interpretations of those decisions.

Methodologically, I approached these newspapers thematically, looking at editorials for the years in which reforms were discussed and applied in Siberia, expanding my scope as debates and references pointed me towards other publications and years. This

⁵ For a brief definition of the term, see Jürgen Habermas, 'The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article', in *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*, ed. by Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner (John Wiley & Sons, 2012), pp. 73–78.

resulted in reading editorials every two months for the years 1882, 1885, 1888, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1897, 1899, 1904 and 1905 in both newspapers. I analysed these articles looking at the issue of reforms, local intellectuals' explanation for their limited implementation in Siberia and their perceived consequences. By comparing the positions found in these newspapers, I argue that Siberia's *intelligentsia* understood the imperial bureaucracy in the region to have entered a crisis which required the implementation of changes. However, Siberian *intelligenty* disagreed on the underlying principles that should direct those reforms, inciting tensions among them that sparked debates in local newspapers. For some of them, improvement of local governance meant stronger colonial ties and gradual assimilation to the core of the empire. For others, administrative change could only be positive if Siberians and local conditions were at the centre of those changes. They argued for solutions that mirrored societal structures in European Russia, as these were progressively becoming more influential in decision-making and even transforming into institutions upon which the state could, albeit reluctantly, rely, as shown by the cholera epidemics, end of century famine relief and *zemstva*-organised aid during the Russo-Japanese war.⁶

The Emergence of the Siberian Press

Siberia's print culture enjoys a longer history than might be assumed from government officials' constant depiction of the region as a remote and under-developed realm. The long periods of openness and state tolerance towards private printing that characterise the history of the Russian printed word were also felt in Siberia before the Great Reforms.⁷ By the second half of the eighteenth century, during the reign of Catherine II, in a time of greater freedom for private publishing, Siberia participated in the development of several provincial presses allowed by the empress. By the 1770s, Siberia's historic capital, Tobol'sk, already enjoyed a strong print culture partly owing to 'the literate traditions of the schismatic Old Believers living in the region'.⁸ However,

⁶ For state reliance on *zemstva* institutions see Porter, 'The Emergence of Civil Society'; Irina V. Myasnikova and Arkady I. Zavyalov, 'Some Aspects of the History of Zemstvo Sanitary Medicine's Development: On Biography of I.I. Molleson', *History of Medicine*, 4.1 (2017), 21–32.

⁷ See Ambler, *Russian Journalism and Politics*, p. 14.

⁸ The importance of Old Believers – or *raskol'niki* – an Orthodox sect that was persecuted from the 17th century in the empire – in the development of print culture is connected to their activities for spreading and

these developments were soon curtailed when in 1796 – in the wake of the Radishchev affair – the government decided to close all private presses in the Russian empire.⁹

During the early 19th century, petitions from Irkutsk to establish a local newspaper were refused by the metropolis.¹⁰ However, the most important setback for the development of Siberia's printed culture came in 1837 when, during the reign of Nicholas I, provincial gazettes – *gubernskie vedomosti* – were established in the European and Ukrainian provinces of the empire, but forbidden from emerging in Siberia 'despite their strong manuscript and print culture'.¹¹ The importance of these provincial publications lay in their officially sanctioned status: they were gubernatorial periodicals released by the local administration that consisted of an official section that contained governmental decrees and imperial announcements, and an unofficial section comprised of 'scholarly historical studies, technical advice to correspondents, short stories, or even social, that is, political, commentary'.¹² The approval of these provincial gazettes came as an attempt to expand the well of information available about the provinces during the reign of Nicholas I. Until then, governors' annual reports had been the only official means that the metropolitan administration and the tsar had of informing themselves about the provinces.¹³ Therefore, by creating provincial gazettes, the government found a vehicle to gather information about the main regional events, as well as providing themselves with a channel for informing the provincial population of governmental decisions. It was a two-way conduit that enabled the collection and dissemination of knowledge in the provincial context.

The development of the *gubernskie vedomosti* is also considered the catalyst for processes that were not necessarily intended by the government, as these gazettes provided the basis for greater social engagement on a local level. Susan Smith-Peter has

maintaining their beliefs through the illegal publication and circulation of religious material. See Gary Marker, *Publishing, Printing, and the Origins of the Intellectual Life in Russia, 1700–1800* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 140.

⁹ In 1790, a year after the French Revolution, the noble Alexander N. Radishchev published his book *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* in which he portrayed the poor conditions endured by serfs. Additionally, he used his book to criticise other aspects of the Russian autocracy which, among other factors, convinced the empress of the dangers that free presses represented for the empire. Radishchev was sentenced to a 10-year exile term in Siberia for his offences.

¹⁰ Smith-Peter, 'The Russian Provincial Newspaper and Its Public, 1788–1864', p. 8.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹² Ambler, *Russian Journalism and Politics*, p. 16.

¹³ See Andrei S. Minakov, 'The Governors' Most Loyal Reports as a Source on the Relationships between Russia's Central and Local Governments in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', *Russian Studies in History*, 53.4 (2014), 22–35.

asserted that ‘the roots of the *zemstvo* were intertwined with the *vedomosti* and other institutions established in the 1830s’¹⁴ that provided information about the imperial provinces. The active participation of the educated public in these outlets, despite being under the control of government officials and state censorship, provided them with a space to imagine themselves beyond their parochial existence and to establish contacts with communities despite ‘never know[ing] most of their fellow-members, meeting or even hear[ing] of them’¹⁵, as Benedict Anderson argues, thus creating ‘social networks [that] involved personal relationships and connections to voluntary associations and government institutions’.¹⁶

Siberia’s exclusion from these developments during the first half of the 19th century prevented both the gathering of valuable information about the regions’ needs as well as more fluid communications with this remote colony. Furthermore, it prolonged the state’s unwillingness to promote the development of local social initiatives, while also failing to provide the much-requested *glasnost*’ among the educated public, who saw in the press a force for accountability, that is, the means for curtailing the omnipotent power of the Governors-general in the region. This was especially true in the Siberian context where, even after Speranskii’s attempts to overhaul the administrative system in the early 19th century, the autocracy still relied on the ‘old tradition of widening the power of its representatives, without providing effective means of controlling and supervising them’, as Raeff argued, turning Governors-general into all-powerful viceroys.¹⁷

Eventually, and fully two decades after their creation, *gubernskie vedomosti* were introduced in Siberia. In 1857, during the initial years of Alexander II’s reign and in a period of greater press freedom and reforms, the introduction of provincial newspapers in Siberia was approved. These were also years in which Asiatic Russia was gaining more geopolitical importance, and so these gazettes became useful for the gathering of data about a region that had been so far scarcely studied. These were the first ever news outlets

¹⁴ Smith-Peter, ‘The Russian Provincial Newspaper and Its Public, 1788–1864’, p. 3. See also Andreas Gestrich, ‘The Public Sphere and the Habermas Debate’, *German History*, 24.3 (2006), 413–30 (p. 421). Gestrich argues similarly in this regard, saying ‘Thus the courts and their diplomats were on the giving as well as the receiving end of newspaper production. This was not only an important factor for the rise and stabilization of the early newspaper market but had more far-reaching effects on the formation of a public sphere’.

¹⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London; New York: Verso Books, 2006), p. 6.

¹⁶ Smith-Peter, ‘The Russian Provincial Newspaper and Its Public, 1788–1864’, p. 2.

¹⁷ Raeff, *Siberia and the Reforms of 1822*, p. 7.

to exist in the region and were modelled on the image of their European predecessors, with official and unofficial sections. Their emergence in Siberia was helped by the favourable disposition found in Siberia's administrative elite, as the influential Governor-general of eastern Siberia, Nikolai Nikolaevich Murav'ev-Amurskiĭ, who stayed in this post from 1847 to 1861, was regarded as politically progressive and more positively inclined towards Siberians' demands than previous administrators.¹⁸

Under these favourable circumstances, a 'fraternal group (*zemliachestvo*)'¹⁹ of Siberian intellectuals that had formed during their years of study in the European university capitals of the empire – Kazan', Moscow and St. Petersburg – began to take advantage of these new outlets to set out their visions for Siberia. Mikhail Vasil'evich Zagoskin, Serafim Serafimovich Shashkov, Afanasiĭ Prokov'evich Shchapov, Grigoriĭ Nikolaevich Potanin and Nikolai Mikhaĭlovich Iadrintsev, among others – the same group that would later be involved in the Siberian regionalist affair – came back to Siberia in the late 1850s and early 1860s after studying in the European universities of the empire. The benign attitude shown towards them by the authorities, the atmosphere of greater freedom that was being experienced during the Great Reforms period and Siberia's remoteness – which enabled a more effective evasion of state censorship – allowed this group to develop their work within the confines of the unofficial sections of these provincial publications, and to set out a political agenda that expressed their regionalist outlook, as 'establishing a regional press was one of the central goals in Siberian patriots from the very beginning'²⁰

An example of Siberians' regional advocacy in the official press during this period can be found in the writings of the most prominent intellectual of this group, N. M. Iadrintsev (1842–1894). The Omsk-born archaeologist, explorer and publicist issued an article in the Tomsk Provincial Newspaper in 1865 that described the history of Siberia's colonisation. In his view, this was a two-stage process which started with a wave of Russian settlers, comprised mainly of runaway serfs and religious schismatics, who first

¹⁸ See Lev M. Dameshek and Irina L. Dameshek, 'Sibirskaiia upravlencheskaia kombinatsiia N. N. Murav'eva-Amurskogo i obrazovanie Zabaikal'skoĭ i Iakutskoĭ oblastei', *Izvestiia irkutskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta: seriia istoriia*, 29 (2019); and Natal'ia P. Matkhanova, 'Obraz N. N. Murav'eva-Amurskogo kak intellektual'nogo lidera v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov', *Izvestiia irkutskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta: seriia istoriia*, 29 (2019).

¹⁹ See Pereira, 'The Idea of Siberian Regionalism', p. 163.

²⁰ Rainbow, *Siberian Patriots*, p. 193.

established themselves in the land. Iadrintsev characterised this first stage of Siberia's occupation as a spontaneous movement of people, as Russians going into Siberia:

Scattered across the wide expanses of our land, living a life in the struggle against nature and the savage peoples of Siberia, playing the role of the conqueror, of the discoverer of new countries; and then of the brave hunter wandering over the pine needles (*khvoia*)* of the new earth; it was a heroic period of our history in which our people developed the spirit of adventurism [...] and the desire to improve and create a new life.²¹

In his words, 'it was purely popular colonisation supported by dissatisfied [peasant] runaways, seeking shelter and independence'.²² His analysis describes the subsequent wave of colonisation as consisting of the arrival and spreading of Russian institutions, when 'there was a government colonisation: the creation of villages, jails and cities. [...] We were forced to bury our adventurism and live the civil life of a sedentary society. In this first period of settled life, our society endured great turmoil!'²³ When this new population came to terms with the newly arrived government authorities, the encounter produced 'Siberians' complaints about the inadequacy of the authorities, which began to be called snitches [*iabednik*], the name with which they were branded for the whole of the next century'.²⁴ These new officials, in Iadrintsev's opinion, were responsible for bringing the Russian metropole into Siberia, for establishing the parameters of the new civilised life Siberians should follow. In his words:

The newly-arrived officials took on the role of the civilisers of Siberia. Coming from educational institutions in Russia, they established noble meetings, conducted noble spectacles [...] in a word they tried to civilise the rough, surrounding mass of natives. Unfortunately, this rough mass looked at the bureaucracy incredulously and considered that it only came to make a profit in the country, and not to civilise it.²⁵

²¹ Nikolai Mikhaïlovich Iadrintsev, 'Obshchestvennaia zhizn' Sibiri', *Tomskii gubernskii vedomosti* (hereafter *TGV*), 2 May 1865, pp. 1–4 (p. 1). Speech read at a literary night in Omsk on November 11, 1864.

²² Iadrintsev, 'Obshchestvennaia', *TGV*, pp. 1–2.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

The historical image presented by the young and politically-committed regionalist Iadrintsev had elements of the romantic attitude found among Slavophiles.²⁶ The idealisation of an audacious people in search of a freer haven to escape from European Russia's serfdom is somewhat exaggerated to create a stark contrast with the following period of subjugation by the expanding Russian state.²⁷ Yet this romanticism underscores a blunt political point. By presenting the perception that initially the region was populated by the spontaneous movement of people, who were later colonised by a bureaucratic system that imposed its control over the population, Iadrintsev framed this history as a conflict between a social body and an imposed bureaucratic structure, creating an absolute dichotomy between state and society. Iadrintsev believed that gradual state expansion curtailed locals' freedom, as officialdom brought a colonial outlook that viewed Siberia as an economic resource that should be exploited, engendering the corruption that afflicted the province. For Iadrintsev, Russian authorities should be held accountable for the miserable condition of the region as 'abusive governors in the guise of Gagarin and Pestel' razed Siberia with their management'.²⁸

The terms used by Iadrintsev to describe this process point towards a comprehension of Russian bureaucracy as something alien, a colonial venture imposed from without by advancing imperial structures. The trope of bureaucratic failure, which was also used in European Russia for explaining social discontent, took another dimension in Iadrintsev's assertions.²⁹ In his view, those who he considered the first wave of Russian settlers in Siberia were prevented from developing any civic commitment in the way European Russians were able within self-government institutions, creating a starker contrast between society and state in Asiatic Russia than in Europe. This difference nurtured Iadrintsev's colonial understanding of the spread of Russian

²⁶ See Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, 'Russia and the West in the Teachings of the Slavophiles, A Study of Romantic Ideology', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 17.2 (1956), 271–272; and Peter K. Christoff, *An Introduction To Nineteenth-Century Russian Slavophilism: Iu. F. Samarin* (New York: Routledge, 2019).

²⁷ This same image has been sustained by the frontier historiography that developed in the U.S. during the 1950s and 1960s, which studied Siberia and Russian imperial expansion to Asia with similar theoretical toolkits developed by Jackson Turner in his study of the conquest of the wild West in North America. See Joseph L. Wiczyński, 'Toward a Frontier Theory of Early Russian History', *Russian Review*, 33.3 (1974), 284; Donald W. Treadgold, 'Russian Expansion in the Light of Turner's Study of the American Frontier', *Agricultural History*, 26.4 (1952), 147–52.

²⁸ Iadrintsev, 'Obshchestvennaia', *TGV*, p. 2. Gagarin and Pestel' were Siberian governors at the beginning of the 19th century, who were portrayed by Siberians as the iconic corrupt officials after Speranskiĭ's reforms.

²⁹ See Marc Raeff, 'The Bureaucratic Phenomena of Imperial Russia, 1700–1905', *The American Historical Review*, 84.2 (1979).

institutions to Siberia, a comprehension that set the tone for his descriptions of Siberia's relationship with the metropolis later in his career.

The freedom which allowed Iadrintsev to denounce the role of the Russian state in Siberia's history during this first period of the local press was not uncommon following the implementation of *gubernskie vedomosti* in the region. Shevtsov has argued that the unofficial section of the Tomsk Provincial Gazette, during the period in which Iadrintsev and Potanin worked there, 'became the organ of the regional movement',³⁰ criticising local administration and calling for reforms. Regionalists' advocacy for the Siberian cause in the early 1860s was not bound to the western half of Siberia. The Provincial Gazette in the capital of eastern Siberia, Irkutsk, was also used by local regionalists to pursue their mission of awakening Siberians' awareness of their unequal treatment within the empire. Under the editorial leadership of the Irkutsk-born publicist Mikhail V. Zagoskin, they described their mission as opposing 'the dominance of the bureaucracy'³¹ in the region, as Gimel'shtein argues. The existence of the press, in their view, was 'the only force able to expel arbitrariness, lawlessness, disrespect for the law [...], embezzlement, and graft from our society'.³²

Zagoskin's activities in the state-owned Irkutsk gazette, were responsible for the first milestone in Siberia's privately-owned press. The publicist's frequent denunciations of the abuses of imperial administration in the pages of the official *vedomosti* brought complaints from authorities in the capital who began to put pressure on the gazette's staff. This situation led to the dismissal of many writers from Irkutsk's *vedomosti*, including Zagoskin himself who to continue with his journalistic activities founded Siberia's first privately owned newspaper, *Amur*, in 1860. Although it only lasted for two years, it represented the first milestone in the development of a free press. Owing its existence to the favourable disposition of the Governor-general, this newspaper represented the initial opportunity for Siberians to develop their own editorial line and pursue topics that were of interest to their cause, without having to confine themselves to official-publication

³⁰ Viacheslav V. Shevtsov, "Tomskie gubernskie vedomosti" v dele "Sibirskikh separatistov" (1863–1865 gg.), *Gumanitarnye nauki v Sibiri*, 2 (2010), 88–92 (p. 90). See for example 'Sibir' v 1 ianvaria 1865' in *TGV*, 1 January 1865, 'Klimat i liudi Sibiri' in *TGV*, March 26, 1865 and 'Grazhdanskoe uvlechenie Sibiri' in *TGV*, 2 April 1865.

³¹ A. V. Gimel'shtein, 'Nachalo gazetnogo dela v vostochnoi Sibiri', *Izvestiia irkutskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta: seriia istoriia*, 1 (2011), 59–70 (p. 62).

³² 'Korrespondentsiia, 1859, 10 dekabriia, 1859', *Irkutskie gubernskie vedomosti*, 10 December 1859, section Neoffitsial'naia chast', p. 8.

guidelines. In *Amur*'s first issue, Zagoskin and the editorial staff explained their newspaper's goal as providing a 'representation of both the needs and requirements of our region, and indications of the ways to satisfy them' in order to participate in the 'social movement taking place in Russia that has reached Siberia'.³³ They believed that Siberians had the right to aspire to reforms and to determine their nature.

This first period of the development of the Siberian press came to an end when the regionalists' affair erupted in 1865. The optimism within Siberia's intellectual group, who were finding spaces to present their ideas to local society with the goal of effecting the awakening that was needed to push forward their demands, was stopped short when the Third Section made arrests in Omsk, Irkutsk, Tomsk, Ural'sk and even in Moscow and St. Petersburg.³⁴ By 1868, all the intellectuals connected directly to the regionalist proclamation, or indirectly by sympathies – identified by having published in official or private newspapers – were sentenced with varying degrees of harshness. The most prominent figures, such as Iadrintsev and Potanin, were stripped of their civil status, exiled to northern Russia, and given terms of hard labour initially for 12 years (later reduced to 5 years). In later writings, Iadrintsev referred to this episode saying that 'we wanted a new transparent court, *zemstva*, more *glasnost*', the encouragement of local industry, and enhanced rights for natives. What was criminal about that?'³⁵

As Stephen Watrous aptly puts it, 'after 1865 Siberian regionalism went into a kind of hibernation. Its chief advocates had been arrested, imprisoned, and then banished to northern Russia'.³⁶ The window of publicity that had opened during the late 1850s and early 1860s began to close again and fears of further government retaliation after the regionalist affair stopped any progress in the development of the printed word in the region. This period, as Zhiliakova has characterised it, was 'the "dead years" when Siberia was deprived of its own publications' and their leaders were scattered throughout the empire.³⁷ Despite a couple of short-lived attempts to open newspapers in Irkutsk and Tomsk in the late 1860s, it was only by the mid-1870s that the cloud over public opinion

³³ Mikhail V. Zagoskin, 'Mestnoe obozrenie', *Amur: ezhenedel'noe izdanie*, 1 January 1860, pp. 1–5 (p. 1).

³⁴ Third Section is the name given to the secret police founded by Nicholas I in 1826.

³⁵ Nikolai Mikhaïlovich Iadrintsev, *Sibirskie literaturnye vospominaniia: Ocherki pervago Sibirskago zemliachestva v Peterburge* (Novosibirsk: Zapadno-Sibirskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1979), p. 283.

³⁶ Watrous, *Russia's 'Land of the Future'*, p. 353.

³⁷ Natal'ia V. Zhiliakova, 'Istoriia dorevoliutsionnoi zhurnalistiki sibiri: etapy issledovaniia, novye napravleniia', *Vestnik tomского gosudarstvennogo universiteta: filologiya*, 3.15 (2011), 126–32 (p. 129).

began to clear. Although official permission was needed to create a new newspaper, which was unlikely to be forthcoming from the administration, Iadrintsev and Potanin – who had been pardoned in 1874 and were living in St. Petersburg – devised a plan with fellow countrymen M. V. Zagoskin and the Irkutsk-born historian and publicist Vsevolod Ivanovich Vagin.

Getting permission to publish a new newspaper was a rather difficult business, especially for people who had already been identified as politically unreliable. However, acquiring a previously existing newspaper was a perfectly achievable goal, and so for the journalists it was only a matter of finding one with an owner willing to sell. They were fortunate as from 1873 there was one such newspaper in Irkutsk called *Sibir*’ which was owned by a military engineer, Klinder, who apparently lacked the interest, time, and resources to run the publication and was about to go bankrupt. Although *Sibir*’ was ostensibly a weekly newspaper, it published only 20 issues in a year, and attracted just 9 subscribers.³⁸ In this context, Zagoskin and Vagin managed to convince the owner of *Sibir*’ to sell it to them, although they retained Klinder as the legal owner. Using this subterfuge, in 1875 the newspaper *Sibir*’ restarted its publication, breathing new life into Siberia’s press. This began the development of the independent Siberian press, which was absolutely divorced from the administration, enabling the formation and consolidation of public opinion in the region. Regionalists attached great importance to the creation of a privately-owned press. As Zhiliakova has argued, *oblastniki* understood that ‘newspapers in Siberia were not only a means of informing readers, but also a factor in the formation of regional self-awareness, a means for the enlightenment and aesthetic education of Siberians, as well as the “creative laboratory” of the young Siberian intelligentsia’³⁹ who sought to mobilise public opinion to their cause.

The setting up of *Sibir*’ did not go unnoticed. The change in editorial staff attracted the close vigilance of the Irkutsk administration who ‘were hostile and intolerant towards the staff of *Sibir*’ and linked them with “untrustworthy” outsiders’.⁴⁰ However, the metropolitan government, from the beginning of the 19th century and then more strongly after the Great Reforms, had begun to recognise the importance of the press. Alexander

³⁸ Watrous, *Russia’s ‘Land of the Future’*, p. 374.

³⁹ Zhiliakova, ‘Istoriia dorevoliutsionnoi zhurnalistiki’, p. 126.

⁴⁰ Watrous, *Russia’s ‘Land of the Future’*, p. 381. See also Viacheslav V. Shevtsov, *Formirovanie i razvitiie gubernskoi ofitsial’noi pressy Sibiri vo vtoroi polovine XIX – nachale XX veka* (Tomsk: Tomskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2014).

II declared in the process leading up to the liberation of the serfs that it was necessary for the state to engage in public debates on the issue, recognising the importance of the press in policy-making.⁴¹ Shevtsov has termed this official attitude as ‘controlled *glasnost*’, that is, the government’s intention of gradually allowing public debate with instrumental ends.⁴² Rather than seeing it necessarily as a space of hazardous dissent or unwanted public interference, ‘expansion of the public, of social participation and of people’s “consciousness” through the press was seen by most imperial officials as a means to deepen the state’s reach into those spheres’.⁴³ In some cases, the government even used the development of the press as a way to find support for their policies, as can be seen from their covert participation in the privately-owned press.

As mentioned above, within the Russian empire’s publishing landscape there was a hybrid category of privately-owned outlets that were financed by the government to sway public opinion. From Catherine II’s reign the government had been participating in more or less concealed ways in the private press in order to support official decisions and challenge dissident public opinion. Catherine’s sponsorship of satirical journals during the 1770s can be understood within that line of interpretation.⁴⁴ In the same way, Effie Ambler discusses the existence of the *ofitsios*, newspapers that were founded and funded by government agents to persuade the educated public to support official policies.⁴⁵ An example of these was the *Severnaia pochta*, a journal released by the MVD that was an instrument of governmental opinion,⁴⁶ or as stated in the newspaper itself, ‘at present, with the rapid development of social activity in all its branches and with the attention given by all educated people to the various phenomena of our social and state life, there is a need to strengthen those sources from which the correct data can be gleaned’.⁴⁷ The approach that the government was taking towards the press, of controlling by participating in it, falls under Rospocher’s argument in which ‘scholars no longer view

⁴¹ See Ruud, *Fighting Words*, p. 106.

⁴² Shevtsov, *Formirovanie i razvitie*, p. 16.

⁴³ Rainbow, *Siberian Patriots*, p. 218.

⁴⁴ See Michael Von Herzen, ‘Catherine II – Editor of *Vsiakaia vsiachina?* A Reappraisal’, *The Russian Review*, 38.3 (1979), 283–97; and Marker, *Publishing, Printing, and the Origins of the Intellectual Life*.

⁴⁵ Ambler, *Russian Journalism and Politics*, p. 22.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁴⁷ ‘Ob izdanii MVD gazety “Severnaia pochta”’, *Severnaia pochta*, 1 January 1862, p. 1.

ensorship and the government of opinions as contrary aspects in the category of public opinion, rather as complementary'.⁴⁸

Government's participation in the press through this hybrid type of newspapers was understood as a complement to the role censorship had in controlling public opinion. A consequence of this policy was that authorities exercised greater tolerance in allowing the setting up of new privately-owned newspapers, even if these were suspected of having an oppositional character, as hybrid outlets were there to counter their influence on society. It was this context that allowed for a renaissance of Siberia's press after the Siberian regionalist affair had settled down. From the late 1870 until the late 1890s Siberian newspapers had the opportunity to put discussions and debates about the issues concerning their region at the forefront of their newspapers, to craft proposals for overturning what was regarded as the region's endemic mismanagement. For example, Aleksandr Vasil'evich Adrianov, a member of the Tomsk statistical society, founded in 1881 the first privately-owned newspaper of western Siberia, the *Sibirskaiia gazeta*, declaring in its first issue that 'the need for a local, provincial press has ceased to be a question. It is even recognized by the capital's press, in which ardent voices are heard in its defense'.⁴⁹ Soon after this, Iadrintsev, using a similar kind of circumnavigating tactics to avoid possible restrictions to his activities when starting *Sibir'*, founded *Vostochnoe obozrenie* in St. Petersburg. This newspaper was published between 1882 to 1906, and was headed by Iadrintsev until 1894, when the *oblastnik* died.

Within this atmosphere, Siberia's print culture developed extensively in the last decades of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th, when there were more than seventy newspapers and fifty journals in circulation, dealing with all kinds of topics.⁵⁰ The dominance of Siberian issues enjoyed in the local press until the end of the 19th century started to change with the large-scale resettlement policies that moved millions of peasants from European Russia, and the improvement of communications that the

⁴⁸ Massimo Rospocher, 'Beyond the Public Sphere: A Historiographical Transition', in *Beyond the Public Sphere. Opinions, Publics, Spaces in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Massimo Rospocher (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2012), pp. 9–28 (p. 17).

⁴⁹ 'Ot Redaktsii, 1 Marta 1881', *Sibirskaiia gazeta* (hereafter *SG*), 1 March 1881, pp. 1–7 (p. 1).

⁵⁰ O. E. Kosykh, 'Sibirskaiia gazetnaia i zhurnal'naia periodika vtoroi poloviny XIX v. – 1919 g. v fondakh Tomskogo oblastnogo kraevedcheskogo muzeia', in *Sbornik materialov IV vserossiiskoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii s mezhdunarodnym uchastiem* (Tomsk: Ministerstvo obrazovaniia i nauki Rossiiskoi Federatsii, 2010), p. 93.

Trans-Siberian railroad inaugurated.⁵¹ As the region gained connections with the imperial core, empire-wide political issues sat alongside regionalist concerns, changing Siberia's press landscape. It was only after the revolution of 1905 that a severe crackdown affected Siberia's burgeoning press. The existing journals used different tactics, such as changing names frequently to evade administrative persecution.⁵² However, under the repressive circumstances in the years leading up to 1917, Siberian newspapers gradually 'started moving away from discussing major political issues, giving preference to petty issues of the day, contenting themselves with reprinting agency telegrams and articles from the capital cities'.⁵³ For this reason, the period from the late 1870s to the late 1890s, on which this chapter is focused, is especially relevant for understanding Siberian regionalism, as it was during these decades when regionalist issues were at the forefront of the editorial decisions made by Siberian publishers.

Within this wide publishing panorama, I have focused my attention on two newspapers developed during the early 1880s to assess their understanding of Siberian issues: *Vostochnoe obozrenie* and *Sibirskii vestnik*. The justification for choosing these two newspapers, from among the myriad of publications that existed in Siberia in these years, lies in the fact that they are among the first privately-owned newspapers in Siberia, starting their publications in 1882 and 1885 respectively, and represented starkly different political agendas that made these newspapers clash and polemicise.⁵⁴

Vostochnoe obozrenie and *Sibirskii vestnik*'s trajectories in the Siberian press

Vostochnoe obozrenie and *Sibirskii vestnik* are useful case studies through which to explore intellectuals' opinions of Siberian administration because of their origins and the people connected to their activities. After a period in which much of the regional press developed within the confines of official publications, such as the *vedomosti*, after 1875 most public debate occurred within the privately-owned press. However, within this

⁵¹ See Irina V. Nam, 'Institutsionalizatsiia etnichnosti v Sibirskom pereselencheskom obshchestve (konets XIX – nachalo XX v.)', *Izvestiia Irkutskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta: seriia politologiiia religiovedenie*, 10 (2014), 34–49; Treadgold, *Great Siberian Migration*.

⁵² For example, a Tiumen' newspaper changed its name seven times in a period of thirteen months starting in 1907. See *Sibirskaiia sovietskaia entsiklopediia*, ed. by M. K. Azadovskii, A. A. Anson, and M. M. Basov, IV vols. (Novosibirsk: Sibirskoe kraevoe izdatel'stvo, 1929), I, p. 598.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 598.

⁵⁴ Marks, *Road to Power*, pp. 51–52.

private landscape it is possible to distinguish newspapers that were born of private endeavours, as Iadrintsev's *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, and those which counted on the financial and organisational support of the local administration, as was the case with *Sibirskii vestnik*. By following the people that participated in these newspapers it is possible to understand the fractious relationship they had, which provides useful counterpoints to analyse the tensions existing within Siberia's *intelligentsia*.

Vostochnoe obozrenie, as discussed above, was founded by the notorious Siberian intellectual N. M. Iadrintsev to gather the young *intelligentsia* pushing to further Siberians' interests within the empire. He described the importance of press organs in pursuing this mission:

We considered the human word as the best of means for the victory of knowledge over ignorance, for the triumph of ideas, for the conquest of human justice. Therefore, it was not surprising that many of us dreamed of becoming writers, and that literature took many into its priesthood. It is no wonder that many of us served her until the end, believing in its main task as a civic duty.⁵⁵

The importance Iadrintsev attributed to the printed word in achieving his political goals was related to the social weight that intellectuals gave to the press in 19th century Russia. After having participated in the Tomsk Provincial Gazette and being exiled, he continued honing his publicist pen in parallel to his research endeavours as an archaeologist. During the early 1870s he participated in the *Kamsko-Volzhskaia gazeta*, a Kazan' publication sympathetic to provincial demands that lasted until 1874. After that, Iadrintsev was pardoned, moved to St. Petersburg, and took a position within the IRGO which led him to conduct ethnographic expeditions in the Altai region. During that time, as mentioned above, he participated in the *Sibir'* newspaper together with fellow Siberian intellectuals Vagin, Zagoskin and Potanin. Upon his return from southern Siberia in 1881, and as a result of his explorations and research, he committed himself to the publication of his most prominent work *Sibir' kak koloniia* (Siberia as a Colony, 1882) while fully engaged in the creation of *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, realising his long-time objective of dedicating a newspaper to the awakening of Siberians' self-consciousness.

⁵⁵ Nikolaï Mikhaïlovich Iadrintsev, 'Studencheskii i literaturnyi vospominaniia sibirika', *Vostochnoe obozrenie* (hereafter *VO*), 23 August 1884, pp. 9–11 (p. 11).

As explained above, the decision to base a newspaper fully engaged with Siberian issues in the empire's capital was a decision based on the differing censorship rules that existed between the capitals and the provinces. However, there were also other reasons, as Sagalaev and Kriukov explain. In their view, this was also explained by a sense of provincial powerlessness due to the fact that, besides censorship, newspapers faced more difficulties in the provinces than in the capitals, where 'issues could be called by their proper names'.⁵⁶ This becomes especially relevant if we consider that *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, together with *Sibir'* and *Sibirskaia gazeta*, acted as a united front in the promotion of the regionalist movement in Siberia and frequently acted in concert to avoid bureaucratic restrictions. Since both *Sibir'* and *Sibirskaia gazeta* were subjected to pre-publication censorship, whenever an article was not allowed by local authorities, *Vostochnoe obozrenie* would use its metropolitan prerogatives and print it, a coordinated strategy that much irritated the imperial administration in Siberia.⁵⁷

During the first years of its existence, *Vostochnoe obozrenie* relied mostly on the work of Iadrntsev and Potanin, who wrote editorials, essays, and ethnographic accounts. Additionally, the newspaper featured political commentary from the exiled population living in the region acting as correspondents.⁵⁸ However, the political commitment of the newspaper, together with the concerted efforts with the other Siberian journals to critique Siberian administration, soon brought the newspaper to the attention of the authorities. Editorials demanding the implementation of *zemstva* in Siberia and an end to local government abuse aroused the animosity of the imperial administration.⁵⁹ It was during this time that governor Vasiliĭ I. Mertsalov – a European Russian bureaucrat who governed Tomsk from 1879 to 1883, returning to European Russia to occupy a post in the Senate – made a first attempt to found a newspaper to counterbalance the trend set by 'the

⁵⁶ Andreĭ M. Sagalaev and Vladimir M. Kriukov, *Potanin: posledniĭ entsiklopedist Sibiri* (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo nauchno-tekhnicheskoi literatury, 2004), p. 92.

⁵⁷ Azadovskii, Anson, and Basov, *Sibirskaia sovietskaia entsiklopedia*, I, p. 593.

⁵⁸ G. V. Divin, *Obraz Sibirskogo universiteta v fokuse gazety 'Vostochnoe obozrenie'* (Tomsk: Tomskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2018), p. 21.

⁵⁹ See for example 'Korrespondentsiia', *VO*, 1 April 1882, p. 5 where it was stated: 'Recently on the occasion of the celebration of October 26, 1882 the entire Russian press unanimously expressed their wish that reforms, a public court and a zemstvo were given to this region. If these wishes are expressed and acknowledged by others, it is clear that they are still more present in the feelings of the local population'. Similarly, in the next number, 'Khronika', *VO*, 8 April 1882, p.9, alluding to the resettlement of European Russian peasants to Siberia, the editorial says the following: 'So, not the administration, but the zemstvo could, with the help of the treasury, organize the work of helping its new members. No matter how they solve the resettlement issue for Russia, on the spot, in Siberia, it can be perverted and paralyzed; hence, the government's goal is not being achieved. A zemstvo can be a good assistant for the government, but the fact of the matter is that there are no zemstvo institutions in Siberia...'

triumvirate', though without success.⁶⁰ During the final months of 1882 *Vostochnoe obozrenie* was issued with a warning from the MVD after Siberian officials complained to metropolitan censors. These warnings were repeated in 1884 and 1885, after which freedom from pre-publication censorship was taken from *Vostochnoe obozrenie*.⁶¹

MVD warnings affected the circulation of the newspaper as they, among other penalties, meant temporary bans to their permission to publish. For example, the 1885 disciplinary action against *Vostochnoe obozrenie* put it out of circulation for 4 months. The bans and bureaucratic interference had an impact on the newspaper's readership as subscribers fell from 1300 in early 1885 to only 150 in 1886 putting it under financial strain.⁶² It was during this period that Iadrintsev, partly because of losing pre-publication censorship freedom and convinced by Potanin's reasoning that a Siberian newspaper should be published in Siberia, decided to move the edition to Irkutsk. This decision was also affected by the fact that the other Siberian newspapers, *Sibir'* and *Sibirskaja gazeta*, had been closed by local authorities in 1887 and 1888 respectively after lengthy publication bans.

Vostochnoe obozrenie's arrival in Irkutsk in 1888 changed the newspaper's editorial staff. There, the already experienced Siberian publicists Vagin and Zagoskin started to collaborate permanently with the newspaper, as well as with the circle of political exiles living in Irkutsk, among whom were Pëtr G. Zainchevskii, and the notorious Lev D. Trotskii. *Vostochnoe obozrenie's* Irkutsk period did not significantly change the regionalist editorial line followed by the newspaper. It did however mean that Iadrintsev progressively retired from the forefront of the publication, dedicating his time to the collection of essays and studies about Siberia that the newspaper published separately from 1886 onwards, the *Sibirskii sbornik: nauchno-literaturnoe periodicheskoe izdanie*. Because of this, in 1891 Vasiliĭ A. Oshurkov (1868–1914) – a Siberian intellectual of the regionalist clique – became *Vostochnoe obozrenie's* main editor.

In 1894, Iadrintsev moved to Barnaul and died shortly afterwards. *Vostochnoe obozrenie* was then taken over by the political exile Ivan I. Popov (1862–1942), an

⁶⁰ Azadovskii, Anson, and Basov, *Sibirskaja sovietskaia entsiklopedia*, I, p. 593. The 'triumvirate' was the name given to regionalists newspapers *Sibir'*, *Sibirskaja gazeta* and *Vostochnoe obozrenie*.

⁶¹ Divin, *Obraz Sibirskogo universiteta*, p. 22.

⁶² Azadovskii, Anson, and Basov, *Sibirskaja sovietskaia entsiklopedia*, I, p. 594.

experienced publicist and politically-engaged European Russian who set up residence in Irkutsk after being exiled to Siberia for his participation in the *Narodnaia volia* movement. Under his leadership, the newspaper's reputation of being the leading Siberian newspaper was maintained with a circulation of up to 20,000 copies a year. Nevertheless, what had been mainly regional advocacy turned into empire-wide oppositional political commentary towards the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. This meant that the government prosecuted Popov more than 20 times, fined him twice and he spent six days in jail for acting as the legal representative of *Vostochnoe obozrenie*.⁶³ After the 1905 revolution, a major crackdown on dissidence meant that by 1906 the newspaper was closed by the authorities. Besides a few attempts to reopen the newspaper under different names – such as *Sibirskoe obozrenie*, *Molodaia Sibir'*, and *Vostochnii kraj* – between June and August 1906, the newspaper finally went out of business.

The trajectory that *Vostochnoe obozrenie* followed in Siberia's press was in many ways connected to the fate of *Sibirskii vestnik*. The regionalist and oppositional editorial line it followed throughout its existence reacted to the centralist views held in *Sibirskii vestnik*, engendering debates that laid bare the tensions existing between Siberian *intelligenty*. As mentioned above, this newspaper was originally conceived as an administrative tool to counterbalance the influence that the 'regionalist triumvirate' had over public opinion. After governor Mertsalov's failed attempt in 1882, it was his successor as Tomsk's governor who managed to create a newspaper sympathetic to local authorities. Ivan I. Krasovskii (1827–1885) – a European Russian official who toured the empire working for the MVD – created *Sibirskii vestnik* as a way to turn the tide of public opinion and avoid what he saw as the oppositional attitude of existing Siberian newspapers. In a letter sent to the press section of the MVD, Krasovskii described the publishing panorama in Siberia and how *Sibirskii vestnik* could be useful and should be granted permission to publish:

Two newspapers are published in Siberia: the Irkutsk-based *Sibir'* and *Sibirskaia gazeta* in Tomsk. Both publications are supported by a third, the uncensored *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, published in St. Petersburg. They all stubbornly inspire in local society the idea that Siberia is an imperial periphery, connected with European Russia exclusively by external links.

⁶³ E. D. Petriaev, *Sotrudniki 'Vostochnogo obozreniia' i 'Sibirskikh sbornikov' (1882–1906)* (Kirov: Kirovskii politekhnicheskii institut, 1987), p. 5.

For these reasons, they argue that Siberia must have its own special ways and means of internal development and that they only need to get consent from the metropolis to introduce the judicial and *zemstvo* institutions, granted already to European Russia, in order to arrange and continue their local development, which they regard as completely separate from the interests of the Russian State.⁶⁴

As this newspaper was to be a private venture, although financially supported by the MVD, governor Krasovskiĭ trusted the foundation and direction of this new journal to an old acquaintance of his who had moved to Tomsk in 1881 and was already in state service in the region: Vasilii Petrovich Kartamyshev (1857–1894). Kartamyshev knew governor Krasovskiĭ from their time in Moscow University's Law School, and was charged with the creation of a newspaper that could, as he explained to the imperial head of censorship Evgeniĭ M. Feoktistov, contribute:

To the regional development of social self-consciousness, which is desirable from the perspective of a Russian person, but which is being confused by the exceptionalist and tendentious views about Siberia and its interests [espoused by] the other three newspapers [*Sibir'*, *Vostochnoe obozrenie* and *Sibirskaiia gazeta*].⁶⁵

The origin of this newspaper is connected with what were called the 'reptile funds' created by Feoktistov: financial and administrative support for the maintenance of government-inclined news outlets that were to counter dissident publications.⁶⁶ Kartamyshev fit well into the plan of setting up a pro-government newspaper. He was a Moscow University-trained lawyer from a noble family in Kursk province who pursued a career in Kiev and Kharkov. However, according to Kostin and Iakovenko, his character prevented him from achieving his bright potential. Explaining why Kartamyshev left a promising future in the Ukrainian provinces for a life in distant Siberia, they put it down to 'some ugly story, [...] starting with "offending, or even beating someone", which

⁶⁴ Natal'ia V. Zhiliakova, 'V. P. Kartamyshev – izdatel' i redaktor "Sibirskogo vestnika"', in *Sbornik materialov Vasiliĭ Petrovich Kartamyshev*, ed. by V. M. Kostin and A. V. Iakovenko (Tomsk: Tomskaia oblastnaia universal'naia nauchnaia biblioteka, 2014), pp. 50–79 (p. 52).

⁶⁵ Quoted in Rainbow, *Siberian Patriots*, p. 229.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

finally cast him out of decent society'.⁶⁷ As someone who was already notorious for disorderly behaviour in public before and after this, Kartamyshev needed a place in which he, his wife Mariia Fëdorovna and their son Pëtr, could start a new life from scratch.⁶⁸ This was the catalyst of Kartamyshev's Siberian life in Tomsk from 1881.

From the beginning of his journalistic venture with *Sibirskii vestnik*, Kartamyshev wished to make evident the confrontational relationship his newspaper was going to have with the already existing, and mainly regionalist, Siberian press. In the first issue, published in May 1885, the editorial staff described their newspaper's mission as filling

a very significant gap noticed in local publications. Whether due to the lack of space behind the abundance of incriminating material, or due to a special view of the tasks of the provincial periodical press, we almost never find in Siberian newspapers any detailed discussion of the works of the local administration. [...] You can write about many things, but, under certain conditions, one must be able to write as the best Russian publicists of the 30s and 40s knew how to do it, that is, by abandoning the annoying and harsh tone, keeping away from excessive one-sidedness and from excessive thickness of colours.⁶⁹

The veiled criticism towards the other Siberian newspapers had to do with the 'triumvirate's' constant denunciation of the local administration, which was the original impetus for founding *Sibirskii vestnik*. But this animosity also turned personal as the local newspapers questioned the moral quality of Kartamyshev's staff at *Sibirskii vestnik*. For the 'triumvirate', it was telling that *Sibirskii vestnik's* staff were all European exiles who had previously been prosecuted for criminal activities in European Russia. Firstly, Evgeniï Valentinovich Korsh (1852–1913), the second man recruited by Kartamyshev, was a Moscow-born lawyer and publicist who had reached Siberia after being involved

⁶⁷ V. M. Kostin and A. V. Iakovenko, 'Materialy k biografii V. P. Kartamysheva', in *Sbornik materialov Vasiliï Petrovich Kartamyshev*, ed. by V. M. Kostin and A. V. Iakovenko (Tomsk: Tomskaia oblastnaia universal'naia nauchnaia biblioteka, 2014), pp. 17–50 (p. 18).

⁶⁸ This aspect of Kartamyshev's personal life was a point of debate in Tomsk. Pëtr Ivanovich Makushin (1844–1910), founder of *SG*, referred to his behaviour saying: 'Kartamyshev became famous in Tomsk for his scandalous behaviour'. See '*Sibirskaia gazeta*' v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov, ed. by Nadezhda M. Dimitrenko (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo nauchno-tekhnicheskoi literatury, 2004), p. 33. This was the same opinion held by S. P. Shvetsov (1858–1930), a regionalist publicist who remembered him saying that 'a newspaper appeared in Tomsk, [...] led by a sworn solicitor, a drunkard called Kartamyshev, not a criminal exile, but not far from them'. See Dimitrenko, *Sibirskaia gazeta*, p. 87.

⁶⁹ V. P. Kartamyshev, 'Ot redaktora, 1885 16 maia', *Sibirskii vestnik, politiki, literatury i obshchestvennoi zhizni* (hereafter *SV*), 16 May 1885, pp. 1–3 (p. 2).

in the embezzlement of clients' money. He was followed in importance by P. M. Polianskiĭ, a former high-ranking executive in the Moscow Commercial Loan Bank who was 'convicted and deported to Siberia under the "Strusberg process"'⁷⁰ in 1876 for bribe-taking. Vsevolod Alekseevich Dolgorukov (1845–1912) was also part of *Sibirskii vestnik*'s staff. The noble-born, St. Petersburg publicist came from a family devoted to journalism, however, he found his way to Siberia on account of his participation in the *Klub chervonnykh valetov* (Jack of Hearts Club), a criminal organisation that became famous in European Russia for numerous frauds and extorsions.⁷¹ The fact that all these editors had a criminal background was denounced by *oblastniki* newspapers as a sign of their untrustworthiness.

The polemics between *Sibirskii vestnik* and the 'triumvirate', from which this chapter draws its main conclusions, continued in this tone for almost 4 years. For example, an 1887 article published in Kartamyshev's newspaper stated that

The anger of our enemies grows as *Sibirskii vestnik* takes on greater importance and a readership that shares the views of our editorial staff on the main issues of local life. Fermented Siberian patriotism, if it has not yet completely lost all its short-sighted adherents, has at least been exposed and has lost nine-tenths of the credit that it used to have thanks to the old organs of the local press [...] We were the first to loudly and openly rebel against the preaching of Siberian isolation, against their ignorant view of the economic interests of the region, against the ridiculous theory that Siberia should develop outside the general laws of human culture, against the perverted idea of a region weakened by local patriots.⁷²

The altercation between these camps in Siberia's journalism did have consequences from an official point of view, however. As mentioned above, *Vostochnoe obozrenie* received numerous warnings, as also did *Sibirkaia gazeta* and *Sibir*'. The temporary bans meant that in 1887 *Sibir*' had to shut down for good as it went bankrupt. The same fate befell *Sibirskaia gazeta* a year later, when suspensions were given to both Kartamyshev's newspaper and *Sibirskaia gazeta*. However, after a 6-month suspension,

⁷⁰ Zhiliakova, 'V. P. Kartamyshev – izdatel' i redaktor', p. 55.

⁷¹ Natal'ia V. Zhiliakova, 'Izdatel'skaia deiatel'nost' V. A. Dolgorukova', in *Vsevolod Alekseevich Dolgorukov: sbornik materialov*, ed. by V. M. Kostin and A. V. Iakovenko (Tomsk: Tomskaia oblastnaia universal'naia nauchnaia biblioteka, 2013), pp. 8–24 (p. 9).

⁷² 'Ot redaktora, 1887 22 Febralia', *SV*, 22 February 1877, p. 1 (p. 1).

it was only *Sibirskii vestnik* which possessed the means and permission to resume operations after their punishments had terminated. The closure of *Sibir'* and *Sibirskaiia gazeta* left *Vostochnoe obozrenie* as the only opponent to Kartamyshev's newspaper after 1888. This coincided with Iadrintsev's move to Irkutsk, a period when *Vostochnoe obozrenie* struggled to remain afloat.

The eventful years between 1885 and 1888, when the 'triumvirate' was decimated and left *Vostochnoe obozrenie* as the only regionalist mouthpiece, were then followed by an easing of the debate between these opposing camps. As Zhiliakova has argued, 'the polemic between *Sibirskii vestnik* and *Vostochnoe obozrenie* and other Siberian newspapers in 1888 did not stop, but it lost its heightened emotionality and tendentiousness'.⁷³ This did not however mean that the Kartamyshev's newspaper lost its popularity in Tomsk as in October 1889 it received the permission to publish on a daily basis, becoming the first newspaper in Tomsk to do so. This period also saw changes in the staff working in the newspaper. Firstly, Mariia Fëdorovna Kartamyshev, the editor's wife who had hitherto managed the newspaper's printing house, was appointed head publisher. Korsh, who had received a full pardon by metropolitan authorities in 1887, left the newspaper while Pavel Moiseevich Polianskii died in 1889.

What remained unchanged from the beginning was Kartamyshev's temperamental character, a situation that eventually brought him unwanted attention from Tomsk's administration. As Zhiliakova has argued, Kartamyshev was too aware of his influential position in Tomsk and of the services that *Sibirskii vestnik* had provided to local administration, an overconfidence that led him to imprudent behaviour. Tomsk's governor, the St. Petersburg-born noble German Avgustovich Tobizen, 'complained about Kartamyshev and in 1890, in a confidential letter to N. N. Durnovo, claimed that the editor had completely gone off the rails and that everyone was afraid of him'.⁷⁴ This bad reputation brought him to court on more than 80 occasions during his lifetime for both censorship and public behaviour issues, although he managed to evade convictions most of the time.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, a slander case against Kartamyshev in October 1893

⁷³ Zhiliakova, 'V. P. Kartamyshev – izdatel' i redaktor', p. 67.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 69.

⁷⁵ Kostin and Iakovenko, 'Materialy k biografii Kartamysheva', p. 46.

landed him in Tomsk's prison for 8 months.⁷⁶ He was released in June 1894 but in August of the same year, at the age of 43, Vasilii Petrovich passed away.⁷⁷

Kartamyshev's death prompted Mariia Fedorovna to rent the editing rights to Grigorii Vasilievich Preisman, a tradesman from Sevastopol who had joined the newspaper in 1891.⁷⁸ Under his leadership, the newspaper changed printing houses, as well as editorial line on several occasions until 1897, when it was 'effectively co-opted by Siberian regionalists and the rest of the exile community in town'⁷⁹ changing the original direction the newspaper had followed since its foundation in 1885. *Sibirskii vestnik* continued to exist in this way until 1905 when it was shut down during the government's crackdown on oppositional news outlets.

The trajectory these newspapers followed from their foundation in the 1880s led them to become the two main news outlets in Siberia's press while maintaining a conflictive relationship between them for most of their existence. An analysis of the tensions that characterised the relationship between them allows me to delve into the views being held by the local *intelligentsia* and their metropolitan counterparts.

Siberia, the Reforms and Press Debates in *Sibirskii vestnik* and *Vostochnoe obozrenie*

There was a shared vision between regionalists and centralists of the need to transform Siberian administration. Disagreements began when the origins of the problems afflicting Siberia were explored as the search for causes was contentious, engendering contrasting images of Siberia and its relationship to the centre. The first of the disagreements has to do with the reach of the reforming process that Russia was undergoing during the second half of the 19th century, and how the dual process of inclusion in and exclusion from institutional changes dictated Siberia's status. Tensions arising from these disagreements generated ambiguities, as *Sibirskii vestnik* used them to

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 23.

⁷⁷ See 'Nekrolog', *SV*, 27 August 1894, Supplement, pp. 1–2; and 'Ot Redaktora, 1894 1 Sentiabria', *SV*, 1 September 1894), pp. 1–2, and 'Vasilii Petrovich Kartamyshev, redaktor "Sibirskago vestnika": biograficheskiĭ ocherk', *SV*, 1 October 1894, p. 2.

⁷⁸ Kostin and Iakovenko, 'Materialy k biografii Kartamysheva', p. 21.

⁷⁹ Rainbow, *Siberian Patriots*, p. 275.

rhetorically position itself as progressive and reform-inclined, while *Vostochnoe obozrenie* became mired in rejecting centrally-imposed amendments, which were at times regarded as furthering metropolitan control, and stymying autonomous drives towards locally-attuned changes.

The second point to be analysed is that of the intellectuals' assessment of Russian and Siberian bureaucrats and the effects their influence had in the region. In this section I discuss to what extent imperial structures were seen to shape individuals' actions and how this evaluation affected the image of individual officials as responsible for the bad state of imperial administration. In so doing, I explore the different strategies that were deployed by the editorial staff in *Sibirskii vestnik* and *Vostochnoe obozrenie* to support and fight what was seen as the maintenance of colonial differences through a rhetoric that pushed for total metropolitan assimilation, without acknowledging locals' opinions or historical trajectory.

The Reach of Reforms: Gradual Assimilation and the Unilateral Metropolitan Approach

A first point of contention between the two newspapers had to do with the extent of Siberia's integration with reformed institutions and how much of it was desirable. For Kartamyshev's editorial team, total assimilation to metropolitan institutions was the ideal end goal of the reform process. This desire was upheld by the view that only the imperial capitals could initiate the changes necessary to address the region's problems. However, this ambition was tempered by a tolerance towards incomplete integration. Kartamyshev's team argued that total assimilation would be a long process, therefore piecemeal integration was a situation that, although imperfect, had to be endured to achieve the final goal. Iadrintsev's newspaper, by contrast, argued that assimilation was problematic, as such a strategy implied leaving aside locals' capacity to affect reforms applied in the region. In their view, this idea reflected the unilateral relationship the empire had with its Asiatic provinces, a colonial understanding that they wished to overturn.

One of the views developed to explain Siberia's position was put forward in *Sibirskii vestnik*. The centralist newspaper argued in an 1885 editorial that ultimately the problems that afflicted Siberia stemmed from being left out of the reach of the Great

Reforms, from not participating in the process of modernisation that was already improving the lives of the European section of the empire. The slow spreading of the centre's institutional developments was being watched patiently but attentively from the provinces, as the editorial argues:

No reform was as necessary for Siberia as judicial reform, because for twenty years our province lived with expectations. The old judicial order, unspeakably difficult for the population, remained in its entirety, even at a time when almost all of European Russia enjoyed the benefits of a new, unselfish, human, fast, independent and equal court for all, without distinction of titles and estates.⁸⁰

The authors said that they believed firmly in the capacity of the centre to breathe new life into the faithful and patient province which, by the implementation of its policies, would be drawn closer to the empire's nucleus of order and prosperity. This idea was again developed in an 1887 New Year editorial that stated that:

For a long, long time, Siberia waited its turn, contented with relatively occasional and fragmentary concerns about the satisfaction of its local social needs, patiently believing that on its communal but not well-maintained streets there would finally be a great festival of the full establishment of the new general Russian institutions and order.⁸¹

The sense of incompleteness, or unfulfilled integration into the core of the empire, was regarded by *Sibirskii vestnik* as one of the sources of Siberia's ailments. This impression was tempered by the fact that centralists understood that reforming Siberia was not something that could be dealt with overnight:

The main inheritance left to us this year lies in a new heightened hope for a better future, a hope reinforced by the formation in St. Petersburg of a special Siberian commission to review local reform projects. But even here it would be out-of-place to have an excess of expectations: if this commission exists, [...] the implementation of their measures will require time and patience.⁸²

⁸⁰ 'Sudebnyiia preobrazovaniia v Sibiri', *SV*, 16 May 1885, pp. 3–6 (p. 3).

⁸¹ 'Ot redaktora, 1887 1 ianvaria', *SV*, 1 January 1887, p. 1.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 1.

At various points, cost constraints were invoked as obstacles to the expansion of reformed institutions into Siberia. According to Kartamyshev's editorial staff, this issue required patience on the part of Siberians as they depended on a series of local budget adjustments to allow for the full development of metropolitan administrative reforms. This was the case in discussions about the introduction of reformed judicial institutions in Siberia. As expressed in the inaugural issue of *Sibirskii vestnik* in 1885:

Finally, the states of all judicial seats and prosecutors are increased by so much that the total expenditure of the treasury on the judiciary in Siberia was determined at 452,990 rubles, that is, twice as much as was spent on it until now (217,415 rubles 86 kopecks). Nevertheless, the amount of maintenance for judicial investigators, members of the district and the chancellery of the provincial courts is still insufficient, and this will likely have an impact on the personal composition of the new judicial institutions.⁸³

The newspaper was quick to point out that the total costs that the centre was incurring had noticeably increased in the attempt to bring the reformed institutions to Siberia. However, this was not enough and was the cause of the unsatisfactory state of the reformed institutions in Siberia, as expressed in an 1887 article, a year after the introduction of the changes: 'In general, our judicial reform is recognised by the Ministry of Justice as insufficient, and immediately after the accession of the new minister, N. A. Manasein, we were told that they were being questioned about the further transformation of the judiciary in Siberia. Unfortunately, there is no news of this good intention'.⁸⁴ The willingness of the capital to recognise the unsatisfactory state of justice in Siberia was considered a consolation and the personal nature of power was invoked as cause to hope for a future deepening of the reforms implemented in Siberia.

As suggested above, the origins of the problems that affected Siberia, from *Sibirskii vestnik's* point of view, were related to the fact that reformed institutions, such as the ones existing in European Russia, had not been yet implemented in Siberia. Those reforms that had reached beyond the Urals had done so in an incomplete form, leaving the region longing for a fuller incorporation to the centre. Following the trend of European Russia's conservative *intelligentsiia*, *Sibirskii vestnik's* position shows a faith in the state as the bearer of reform. From Kartamyshev's understanding of the problems affecting

⁸³ 'Sudebnyiia preobrazovaniia v Sibiri', *SV*, 1885, p. 5.

⁸⁴ 'Ot redaktora, 1887 1 ianvaria', *SV*, p. 1.

Siberia, it is possible to recognise *Sibirskii vestnik*'s belief in a kind of progress that was only possible within the central government's movement forward, a Petrine confidence in the state's power to modernise and bring wealth to the people. *Sibirskii vestnik* argued that in order to develop Siberia to its fullest capacities, it was necessary to erase all the differences between both regions, to fully incorporate Siberia to the empire's core. Nevertheless, the empire was vast and *Sibirskii vestnik* was understanding of the competing demands that constrained the empire's capacity to achieve the ultimate goal of erasing differences between Siberia and European Russia. In this sense, the incompleteness of the reforms could be explained by the elevated costs that the treasury calculated, a line of argument that resembles Chatterjee's idea of a normalising and modernising mission that shall never be completed.⁸⁵

This was also a point of discussion among Siberian commentators. Iadrintsev and the 'triumvirate' saw the issue of cost as an insufficient justification for the state of neglect in which Siberia languished. In their view, metropolitan cost assessments were an example of how the centre understood its relationship with Siberia. They argued that all the calculations the metropolitan centre provided referred to expenses that the state would have to incur to fulfil its commitments. However, these excluded the costs which burdened local individuals affected by a lack of reformed institutions. *Vostochnoe obozrenie* made a point of citing an unnamed Siberian in the St. Petersburg journal *Svetoch*:

Indeed, old courts are cheaper than new ones, that is, the treasury would send less money than it would for the new ones. But I must ask: how many old courts can the Siberian population stand? The losses suffered by the population, if they can be eliminated, cannot be ignored: does not the treasury draw its funds from sources that the population possesses, and, therefore, is it not interested in eliminating the causes that hamper the well-being of its payment units? [...] Not to mention bribery, the procedural guard of the court, with its formalism, clerical secrets and the length of judicial 'red tape', leads litigants to great moral anxiety, and to material damage, and sometimes to complete impoverishment.⁸⁶

For *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, understanding the origin of the problems of Siberia in terms of the role played by costs illustrated the metropole's colonial outlook towards

⁸⁵ Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*.

⁸⁶ 'Sibirskie voprosy i reformy', *VO*, 1 April 1882, pp. 10–11.

Siberia. In their perspective, the logic of moderation, patience and dosage used when discussing reforms fell short of grasping the real situation as it was lived locally by Siberians. From the *oblastniki*'s perspective, changing the current system of justice administration meant that the ordinary individual could avoid submitting their legal affairs to the whims of a system that functioned irrationally. Locals considered that receiving the means to reform judicial institutions was a necessary recognition of their status as part of the political body of the empire, not simply as mere sources of state revenue – as colonial subjects –, but also as recipients of the benefits of state administration. When discussing the procedures that peasants must follow to appeal unfair decisions in the *volost*' (township) courts in Siberia, an article from May 1890 stated that 'such applications are usually ignored [...]. In addition to money, each petition, without exception, costs another two or more bottles of vodka, depending on the importance of the case, but this, of course, is not included in the initial price'.⁸⁷ The state in which Siberia's courts found themselves was seen by Iadrintsev and his staff as a reflection of the way the centre understood its relationship with the provinces: as a unilateral process by which the only cause of economic concern was that of the centre, whose prosperity should not be disturbed on account of the differences existing between centre and periphery.

It was this unilateral approach to understanding the process of reform that was challenged by *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, which argued that decisions being made without Siberians' participation ignored the possible benefits that reformed institutions could have in the province. As an article discussing the *volost*' courts in Siberia argued:

The change to such a vexatious state [of *volost*' courts] is a provocation to the Siberian people and should obviously be made without delay, without stopping at any economic considerations. No matter what the expenses are, a judicial reform is required, as these great costs would return a hundredfold.⁸⁸

In other issues that had affected Siberia for a long time, such as the exile system, it is possible to find a similar attitude in *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, which regarded cost constraints as an argument that could be manipulated to the benefit of either the centre or Siberia. The issues of vagrants, crime and the exile system were a constant of Siberian

⁸⁷ 'Sovremennoe sostoianie i zhelatel'nye izmeneniia volostnogo suda v Sibiri (prodolzhenie)', *VO*, 20 May 1890, pp. 9–10 (p. 7).

⁸⁸ 'Oдна из неотложнейших нужд Сибирской деревни', *VO*, 1891, p. 9.

daily life. So, when the St. Petersburg newspaper *Novoe vremia* (New Times) published in 1888 an estimation of the costs of the Siberian exile system, arguing that the costs for the Russian state were ‘colossal’ and it should therefore reconsider the whole system, *Vostochnoe obozrenie* was quick to state that these calculations do ‘not give, however, a full idea of the cost to Siberia proper. The exiles are putting a burden on the budget of both the state and the inhabitants of those localities where they are being assigned to exile’.⁸⁹

For *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, the origins of the poor functioning of Siberia’s administration could not be found in cost calculations. Talking about them was perceived as a rhetorical justification, as monetary assessments and the objective appearance they provided were adaptable to the interests of those doing the arithmetic, as the *oblastniki* were striving to demonstrate with their own assessments of the true costs of imperial administration. Siberian regionalists thought this particular explanation of the origins of the Siberian state of affairs could be challenged, as they considered it part of the instrumental, and therefore colonial outlook that dominated the centre’s relationship to Siberia.⁹⁰

On the contrary, *Sibirskii vestnik* saw the state’s degree of involvement with the different regions of the empire as a reliable measure of those lands’ advancement. When state institutions extended their purview to hitherto benighted regions, its influence was perceived to be benign, as the article titled ‘*Na zare novoi zhizni*’ (At the Dawn of a New Life) contended:

For our remote, harsh and inhospitable north-east Siberia (Iakutsk region), the approaching July of this year will be an unforgettable epoch in the consequences for their life and further advancement along the path of progress, which will undoubtedly follow from the introduction in the province of the judicial statutes of Emperor Alexander II.

By the highest command, on May 15th of last year, this remote corner of our vast homeland receives the soft light of judicial truth, called to life at the will of the Great Emperor-Liberator for the benefit of his subjects!⁹¹

⁸⁹ ‘Vo chto obkhoditsia ssylka v Sibiri’, *VO*, 6 November 1888, p. 2.

⁹⁰ Iadrntsev studied the Siberian exile system extensively, criticising its historical consequences for the region. See for example Nikolai Mikhaïlovich Iadrntsev, *Russkaia obshchina v tiur'me i ssylke* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia A. Morigerovskago, 1872).

⁹¹ ‘Na zare novoi zhizni’, *SV*, p. 1.

The identification of progress with the extension of European cultural influence over non-Europeans is a recurrent theme in the 19th century and, as the era progressed, the Russian bureaucrats intensified the colonial rhetoric in this direction.⁹² The advancement of Russian institutions into Siberian regions, which had formerly enjoyed high degrees of autonomy, was identified as a step towards the elimination of the same kind of problems affecting the western half of Siberia, and worked as a metaphor that identified Yakutia with western Siberia; the necessity of complete integration with the core of the empire in order to fully develop.

The pre-eminence of ‘culture and perceived loyalty to the state’⁹³ as a justification for the appropriation of land in Russian imperialism meant that incorporation into state structures gave Yakutia a new standing within the empire, as it would now be tied more firmly to the destiny of the Russian state, while progressively moving away from its previous neglected state. This was expressed hopefully in an 1887 article in *Sibirskii vestnik*: ‘There, in the centre of governmental and state activity, the destinies of millions in the Russian provinces are being decided, and all the hopes of the Russian people are invested there’.⁹⁴ At the same time, these statements were impregnated with a faith in the activities of the metropolitan centre, as the only place where initiative was possible and desirable. *Sibirskii vestnik*’s faith in full administrative incorporation to the centre, erasing colonial differences, together with its tolerance for the incompleteness of this incorporation can be interpreted as part of the strategies deployed by imperial authorities to maintain the inclusionary and exclusionary methods that sustained colonial landscapes.

This enlightened approach to understanding Russian institutional expansion towards previously autonomic regions, and the pre-eminence of the centre as the provider of solutions, was not shared by regionalists in *Vostochnoe obozrenie*. Their view of modernisation, and the role played by the Russian state in this process, was regarded less favourably than that of *Sibirskii vestnik*. In the correspondence section of *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, a letter from Fergana, in modern day Uzbekistan, described the introduction

⁹² *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, ed. by Edward Cavanagh and Lorenzo Veracini (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 322. See also Morrison, ‘Metropole, Colony, Imperial Citizenship’; Brian J. Boeck, ‘Containment vs. Colonization: Muscovite Approaches to Settling the Steppe’, in *Peopling the Russian Periphery: Borderland Colonization in Eurasian History*, ed. by Nicholas B. Breyfogle, Abby M. Schrader, and Willard Sunderland (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 41–60; Sunderland, ‘Empire without Imperialism?’; Robert D. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006) for discussions on the type of imperialism developed by the Russian empire in the second half of the 19th century.

⁹³ Cavanagh and Veracini, *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, p. 322.

⁹⁴ ‘Ot redaktora, 1887 1 ianvaria’, *SV*, p. 1.

of the Russian-style courts to the Steppe Governor-generalship ruling over Kyrgyz and Turkeستاني people: ‘We, the Russians who were in the region, pursued a civilising mission, which had the goal of initiating cultural change in the country in order to eventually destroy barbarism. It is clear: one of the most prominent factors for carrying out the truth in natives’ life should be a court’⁹⁵, agreeing initially with the principles laid out in the previous *Sibirskii vestnik* article, which points out a shared view of European cultural values’ superiority.⁹⁶ In the same vein, the letter continues that: ‘The Russians appeared, and the beginning of the new era began in the life of the natives’.⁹⁷ By this, the letter refers to the erasure of the previous customary dispensation of justice, carried out by the local Kyrgyz and Turkeستاني community, which was replaced by Russian procedures.

However, the letter noted that bringing the indigenous populations closer to the civilised ways of their conquerors, far from producing improvements, resulted in ‘the confusion of administrative and judicial power in the hands of the military governor,’⁹⁸ as natives were ‘afraid to show the truth [in judicial procedures] because Russian courts often released those accused of serious crimes’.⁹⁹ The article argues that the natives’ system existing from before the arrival of Russians, whatever their shortcomings, was the ‘result of local conditions, among which it arose and developed’¹⁰⁰, wishing to stress the relevance of context for assessing the effectiveness and value of cultural forms, whether Russian European or foreign. It seemed that the advancement of Russian officials and institutions was not considered a benign process that helped the local population in moving forward along civilisation’s path. On the contrary, *oblastniki* talked about the native population again as a metaphor for their own destiny, in which their own development and history was not recognised as a source of valid rights upon which prosperity could be built. Furthermore, it pushed the conclusion that societies who had no participation in the development of the legal and cultural frameworks which were ruling them, were bound to produce errors and confusion. In this way, *oblastniki* were arguing for their right to participate in the construction of their own institutional structures, questioning acritical assimilationist policies by the metropolitan centre.

⁹⁵ ‘Korrespondentsiia, 1882 4 noiabria’, *VO*, 4 November 1882, pp. 5–8 (p. 7).

⁹⁶ See Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, (Oxford; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000).

⁹⁷ ‘Korrespondentsiia, 1882 4 noiabria’, *VO*, p. 7.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

Another contentious point between Kartamyshev and the regionalists during the second half of the 1880s was the former's analysis of the reasons behind the origins of the state of chaos existing in Siberia: namely, the insufficient presence of Russians in the region. In 1888, on occasion of the opening of Tomsk University, *Sibirskii vestnik* printed an article that referred to the benefits that would be brought to the region by the establishment of this educational centre. In this letter from the editors, Kartamyshev argues that the university would bring to Siberia a set of values hitherto inexistent in the region:

How many honest, sincere, and new noble demands from life, how much broader humanity, supreme interests and practical knowledge will be brought by the university into the remote corners of Siberia, where there is now rude smug ignorance, *kulaks* and no spiritual interests! In truth, the opening of a university in Siberia is the beginning of a new era, against which later generations will measure their mental and moral growth.¹⁰¹

The acquisition of a university in Siberia was regarded as the epitome of Russia's willingness to get involved in Siberian affairs. It meant that from now on, Tomsk was home to an official branch of the centre, from which European Russia would finally spread without being encumbered by the inconveniences of territorial separateness between province and metropolis. *Sibirskii vestnik* pictured the university as a capsule of Russianness in an otherwise barren landscape that would be able to disseminate important cultural values throughout the region.

From Kartamyshev's perspective many of the problems that afflicted Siberia were generated because of the difficulties associated with the absence of such institutions. In his analysis, the editor points out that the university would solve one of the most pressing problems affecting Siberia, namely, the absence of educated people to work in the ranks of the imperial administration, especially in two fields: the judicial and pedagogical. The difficulties in attracting people from European Russia to come to this remote region, and fill bureaucratic posts, were considered as known facts that explained the troublesome state of imperial institutions in the region, as expressed in the following lines: 'It is

¹⁰¹ 'Ot redaktora, 1888 2 sentiabria', *SV*, 2 September 1888, pp. 1–2 (p. 2).

unnecessary to explain the unpleasantness connected to the task of bringing officials of all occupations and institutions from European Russia'.¹⁰² However, what made matters worse was that usually newcomers (*priezzhie*) would not stay for long. As described in the article:

Probably the greater inconvenience is the rapid change of the service staff in Siberia. As soon as the incoming people get used to local customs and rights, and to the study of local life and its needs, their service term expires. And most are in a hurry to return to their homeland in European Russia, so that they can use the fruits of their Siberian service with greater convenience. Newcomers struggle to reach a certain familiarity with local life, and then leave Siberia, like their predecessors did before them.¹⁰³

This practice was troublesome, in this article's perspective, as it explained 'why the apparently large influx of fresh service forces to Siberia does not bring the benefits that one would expect, because these forces remain in Siberia for a short time. Due to this, the extensive Siberian territory remains very often superficially studied'.¹⁰⁴

By arguing that many of the problems affecting Siberia at the time had to do with the ephemeral presence of European Russians in the region, *Sibirskii vestnik* was putting forward a view in which the presence of Russian Europeans in Siberia was directly related to the improvement of imperial administration in the region. By doing so, it is possible to discern two lines of thought that underlie *Sibirskii vestnik*'s position on the origin of Siberia's state. The first of these relates to the conclusions developed in the previous chapter about Tomsk administration. The distribution of positions within the imperial bureaucracy was described as divided by geographical and educational criteria, whereby educated metropolitan individuals occupied the higher-ranking posts while the local, less educated individuals staffed the middle and low range positions. As Hechter argues, this process represented a regulation of 'the allocation of social roles such that those roles commonly defined as having high prestige are reserved for its members. Conversely, individuals from the less advanced group are denied access to these roles'.¹⁰⁵ Arguing for a wider and longer presence of European Russians manning posts in the imperial bureaucracy showed that Kartamyshev believed in the preservation of higher-ranking

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, p. 9.

posts for newcomers, for upholding the divisive line between Siberians and European Russians, at least until Siberians could attain appropriate levels of education in order to manage their issues. It also implied that Siberians' demand for participation in administrative structures – in a period in which petitions for societal structures such as *zemstva* were a hotly contested topic in the empire – was regarded as less relevant to solving local problems than continuing the merging process under the guidance of European Russian officials.

Sibirskii vestnik's positive evaluation of Russians' presence in Siberia implies that their continued presence was seen to have positive effects on the overall performance of imperial administration. On the contrary, their absence – and consequently local officials' participation in administration – was the reason behind Siberia's present condition. This evaluation indicated that local bureaucrats' lack of training had a negative effect upon the administrative structure, allowing them to conclude that the bureaucracy's problematic state could be explained by the presence of locally-born officials. This latter conclusion was tempered by the hope that Tomsk University, as a seed of Russianness, would develop the civilising mission which the locally-born bureaucracy needed to undertake for raising their standards and put an end to Siberia's problems in the age of reform. However, this could only be achieved gradually and under metropolitan supervision.¹⁰⁶

This assessment of the presence of local bureaucrats in *Sibirskii vestnik* was confirmed by the newspaper's appraisal of the role of lower bureaucrats in explaining the chaotic state of administration in Siberia during this period. Kartamyshev's editorial staff understood the problem from a perspective of personal responsibility, in which individuals and their use of the existing room for manoeuvre enabled arbitrariness. In this sense, it continued the tone set in former points of analysis, providing an image of the locally born officials as untrained, a body of workers that was not ready to take charge of the management of the region. This opinion echoed general descriptions of the bureaucracy throughout the empire, which described them as unconscientious individuals who took advantage of their positions to further their own interests. In this sense, the image that middle and lower bureaucrats enjoyed in the eyes of Siberia's centralist *intelligentsiia* was akin to that of the European section of the empire, whose contempt for clerical bureaucracy was born out of their image as autocratic tools, as opposed to noble

¹⁰⁶ As the article 'Mysli vslukh (Thinking Aloud)' warned, it would also require patience from Siberians, as the arrival of officials from European Russia could cause 'judgement and gossip' among the local population because of these young men's 'inclinations'. See 'Mysli vslukh', *SV*, 1 January 1886, p. 4.

influence or societal structures.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, the colonial context of this assessment added another layer of analysis to their evaluation of middle and lower ranking bureaucrats, as most of these officials were of Siberian origin. This made *Sibirskii vestnik*'s general assessment of Siberian bureaucracy one directed against locals' bureaucratic performance that had a striking ethnic dimension.

This view of local bureaucracy was presented straightforwardly in one article describing the implementation of the judicial reform in Siberia in 1885. In the journalist's view, the need for such reforms in Siberia 'was doubly sensitive: the absence of a proper and rapid judicial procedure equally paralysed the activities of both administrations and public self-government bodies, strengthening arbitrariness and disregard for the law which, in the skilful hands of the bailiff (*ispolnitel'*), was easy to turn against the layman'.¹⁰⁸ The view being put forward in this extract was that the crisis affecting Siberian governance was caused by the incomplete incorporation of the region into European Russia's reforms, which was damaging the normal development of government activities in Siberia. The higher bureaucracy had its hands tied institutionally by the Russian empire's insufficient involvement with the region. At the same time, the paralysis experienced in Siberia's higher spheres of imperial government meant that the regular Siberian inhabitant had to deal with cunning clerks who used loopholes in regulations to squeeze profits from their fellow countrymen. In this sense, the importance attributed to the institutional framework within which the administration performed its duties, and therefore, the importance of implementing the innovations coming from the European section of the empire to breathe new life into Siberia's administration, were somehow irrelevant, as the skilful manoeuvring of officials allowed them to circumvent any possible check on their exercise of arbitrary rule.

This view of the hopelessness of Siberian bureaucracy seemed to be confirmed in a later polemical article devoted to the importance of Russian influence in Siberia, which argued that:

Everything that is best in Siberia, in all spheres of public and governmental activity, all of it was brought up in Russian educational institutions, with the resources of the Russian people, everything came from

¹⁰⁷ See Marc Raeff, 'The Bureaucratic Phenomena of Imperial Russia, 1700–1905', *The American Historical Review*, 84.2 (1979).

¹⁰⁸ 'Sudebnyiia preobrazovaniia v Sibiri', *SV*, p. 3.

the different university corners of the "metropolis". [...] Count how many local people, suitable for the activities of updated judicial institutions, were found in Siberia? All the best representatives of the court were sent to us by the "metropolis", taken from the young officials of the new judicial institutions established in Russia according to the charters of November 20, 1864, or from students of Russian universities, and even the transformation of the Siberian courts, no matter how insignificant they are, were caused by the general judicial reform of 1864.¹⁰⁹

As was explicitly argued here, there was no one in Siberia who could run the newly-introduced reforms, there were no locals capable of handling the issues that affected Siberia, because the reforms, even if they were introduced piecemeal, needed trained people to wield them. If not, it was argued, they would fall into the abyss of arbitrariness and mismanagement. The argument presented in Kartamyshev's newspaper stood in opposition to Potanin's views about the issue of educated individuals in Siberia. From Potanin's perspective, Siberia suffered from the overt imperial centralism that drew intellectuals away from their regions to the imperial capitals. In an article published in *Sibir* Potanin wrote that 'the provincial press is called upon to oppose further progress in this direction [centralisation]; it should raise the issue of a more even distribution of benefits across regions; and should try to prevent its local *intelligentsiia* from absenteeism and warn their countrymen from their desolation'.¹¹⁰

However, *Sibirskii vestnik* dismissed this argument and proposed that severing Siberia's links with Russia would amount to letting Siberia drift away and fall under the influence of other neighbouring imperial formations:

No, Siberian society is not as simple and short-sighted as to carry us into the maze of a Chinese existence. It is becoming more and more imbued by the consciousness that the guarantee of the development of our periphery lies in the strongest possible communication with Russia and the entire educated world, and that this communication is supported by both the truly enlightened university science by Siberians, and by the best figures traveling here from internal Russia, led here by the new forces that will bring about

¹⁰⁹ 'Ot redaktora, 1887 1 marta', *SV*, p. 1.

¹¹⁰ Referenced in Natal'ia V. Zhiliakova, "'Tsentri ili provintsiiia?'" Oblastnicheskaia diskussiiia v Sibirskoi pechati 1870–1880-x godov', *Vestnik NGU. Seriiia istoriia, filologiiia*, 6 (2010), 13–19 (p. 15).

the historic task of familiarising Siberia with the general Russian movement forward. The abuse of power, especially by its lower agents, was, is and will always exist, in one degree or another, and from them one should seek salvation in raising the experience and moral level of local bureaucracy, and not in the isolation of Siberia, or in the reckless libel directed to all those born outside the Tobol'sk province.¹¹¹

The prevailing view in *Sibirskii vestnik* seemed to rest on the faith that further Russian European assimilation would provide the means for joining the general advancement of Russian civilisation, while also preventing Siberia from falling into the 'backwardness' of an Asiatic existence, especially during a period in which there were growing imperial anxieties about the Siberian frontier's role in world trade.¹¹² At the same time, it introduced the notion that even after Siberia's full integration to the heartlands of the Russian empire, the region would be at the mercy of their bureaucrats, something that could only be overcome by raising their moral and educational level, thus removing all responsibility from the imperial structure in which officials operated. While highlighting the relevance of assimilation, this article also references the colonial underpinnings of Siberia's relationship to St. Petersburg. Regionalists' use of colonial rhetoric to denounce their condition was used with extreme caution, as such language would probably sound censorship alarms that could ultimately earn them publishing suspensions.¹¹³ Therefore, it was more likely to find such language in centralist accounts, as the ironic use of 'metropolis' and the evocative term 'internal Russia' (*vnutrenniaia Rossiia*) confirm.

Vostochnoe obozrenie developed a different assessment of the imperial bureaucracy, resting on a structural perception of the origin of Siberia's chaotic administrative condition. This structural explanation understood that individuals in imperial administration worked under a flawed framework which reproduced its shortcomings, making their practitioners helpless to amend institutional errors. Although the diagnosis of a problematic middle and lower-rank bureaucracy was shared, their origins were seen as different. The perspective presented by *Vostochnoe obozrenie* had to do with the influence that imperial government structures had over the day-to-day practice

¹¹¹ 'Ot redaktora, 1887 1 marta', *SV*, p. 1.

¹¹² See Eva-Maria Stolberg, 'The Siberian Frontier between "White Mission" and "Yellow Peril," 1890s–1920s', *Nationalities Papers*, 32.1 (2004), 165–81.

¹¹³ As happened to the *SG* in 1887, which was suspended for 8 months because of its 'editors' tendentiousness, disregard for deadlines and general hostility to the administration'. Rainbow, *Siberian Patriots*, p. 235.

of middle and lower-ranking officials in the region and not the other way around. For example, an 1882 article discussed the reforms applied in Siberia by M. M. Speranskiĭ in 1822, arguing that despite the reformer's effort to curb governors' arbitrariness by creating institutions that could balance their exercise of power, Speranskiĭ's endeavours were fruitless, as 'the bureaucratic councils turned out to be weak, sluggish and infected with a clerical routine that rendered them powerless'.¹¹⁴ The institutional framework developed to deal with the same problems that were affecting Siberia almost half a decade earlier created a situation in which the weight of all bureaucratic activity could not prevent the existence of misconduct and abuses, generating a context in which administrative work was subordinated to governors' discretionary power.

This same problem was recognised in an article written in 1890 about the organisation of *volost'* (township) courts, which were the lowest judicial instance available to peasants and which 'was very much an institution run by and for peasants. Cases were heard and decided by three or four peasant judges, sitting in the presence of a scribe who recorded the proceedings'.¹¹⁵ In this case, the article's author criticised the functions of one of the main points of contact between the peasantry and imperial bureaucracy: *pisaria* (scribes) who worked in *volost'* courts, advising the elected judges in peasant communities, and writing court decisions, among other functions. In his article, the journalist describes the influence this figure had in the widespread failure of local administration to meet the needs of the peasant population, concluding that their role was detrimental to the correct functioning of the court, as

almost all cases are decided not by custom or the internal conviction of judges, but by 'law' – an unrestricted interpreter of which is the scribe. In the *volost'* that I observed, as it was said before, the scribe is an honest man, and if through his fault some wrong decisions are sometimes made, it is solely due to a failure to understand the provisions of the *volost'* court. Yes, it is difficult for an uneducated person to abandon the written 'law', when the whole surrounding context says the opposite, even if obviously unjust deeds are done based on the 'law'.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ 'Nachalo Sibirskikh reform', *VO*, 29 April 1882, pp. 1–3 (p. 1).

¹¹⁵ Burbank, *Russian Peasants Go to Court*, p. 4.

¹¹⁶ 'Sovremennoe sostoianie i zhelatel'nye izmeneniia volostnogo suda v Sibiri (prodolzhenie)', *VO*, p. 9. See also 'Odna iz neotlozhneishikh nuzhd Sibirskoĭ derevni', *VO*, p. 10. The writer similarly argued that

The scribes' role therefore was described as having a negative impact on peasants' administration of justice. However, this was not necessarily explained by their moral quality, but by a framework which assigned these scribes tasks that exceeded their capacities, as explained later in the same article: 'the most intelligent lawyer in place in *volost*' courts would be at a dead end when analysing the first case, having met such diverse local agricultural or other circumstances that he won't have the slightest opportunity to understand them'.¹¹⁷ The reliance on 'written law' over customary law was criticised as it demanded from scribes a knowledge of law codes that was unrealistic for people manning the lowest levels of judicial institutions. As was written in a later article in *Vostochnoe obozrenie*: 'Who does not know that the highest law colleges, consisting of educated lawyers, having dealt all their lives with law, often make many errors, which is recognised to be a perfectly normal phenomenon. [...] And here they demand that illiterate peasants and semi-literate clerks apply the written law to the most varied cases of village life'.¹¹⁸ Burbank argues similarly, indicating that despite it being impossible to demand from trained lawyers a total knowledge of the law 'it was nonetheless a demand that critics of rural courts placed on peasants',¹¹⁹ highlighting the existing gap in the imperial justice system. Furthermore, the reference made about scribes' reliance on 'written law' over customary law is seen by Burbank as a dichotomy that 'must be left at the doorstep if we wish to exit the world of Russia's elites and enter into the practiced legality of township courts'.¹²⁰ The burdens placed upon the lower clerks' shoulders were considered inadequate for dealing with the issues of rural communities in Siberia. Therefore, the ad-hoc solutions devised by scribes, which failed to answer the *volost*'s demands, were seen to be the result of institutional structures that placed the onus of administration on the wrong people and the wrong level of the bureaucracy.

In a similar vein, an 1888 article described the case against clerks of the Balagansk district in Siberia. The case concerned service abuse on the part of officials who broke accounting rules in city administration by creating a private book for keeping a record of the distribution and loans of money among local officials. This was a breach of procedures

the '*volost*' clerk (assuming a complete absence of malicious intent on his part) explains the law to the judges' producing sentences put together from a series of legal articles that had no relation whatsoever to the condemned deeds, and only resting in written articles that the scribe thought were the most similar to the issue being judged'.

¹¹⁷ 'Sovremennoe sostoianie i zhelatel'nye izmeneniia volostnogo suda v Sibiri (prodolzhenie)', *VO*, p. 10.

¹¹⁸ 'Oдна из неотложнейших нuzhd Sibirskoi derevni', *VO*, p. 10.

¹¹⁹ Burbank, *Russian Peasants Go to Court*, p. 7.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

as established ‘on the grounds of page 150 and 151 of the code of punishments’.¹²¹ Nevertheless, the case was decided in favour of the accused clerks as the creation of the illegal book was considered to be a necessity, especially in a region devoid of a treasury that could have kept records of these transactions. The article explains this decision in the following way:

Papaev could not be blamed for the establishment of a private book, and rather the judge should have thanked him, because without receiving a book from the control chamber, he could not keep track of transactions, and so he started his book. If it is possible to blame him for something, then, perhaps it could be for not being particularly diligent in the supervision of his employees, but can you blame him even for this? He had such a mass of all kinds of duties on him that he had no physical ability to supervise all these people.¹²²

In this case, a comparable approach is taken to understand officials’ behaviour. Following Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter’s assessment of Russia’s legal system, it was common to believe that ‘mutual understandings between individuals could be more efficacious than legal procedures and that the goal of justice could take precedence over strict observance of the law’.¹²³ As such, *Vostochnoe obozrenie* recognises that there was a problem with the way administration was run. However, these malfunctions were beyond the reach of middle and lower-ranking officials, and so they accommodated their clerical practices to cover the gaps appearing in day-to-day work.

It can be concluded that there were contrasting ways of understanding the problems that afflicted the region by analysing these two newspapers. In their evaluation of Siberian issues, they offer insight into the main understandings behind those who identified with regionalist or centralist tendencies, as *Vostochnoe obozrenie* and *Sibirskii vestnik* brought their political agendas forward when analysing different aspects of the reforms that Siberia needed to undergo. The analysis provided so far focused on the reactionary period of Alexander III, when conservative policies were being rolled out in the core provinces, curtailing many of the social prerogatives provided under the framework of *zemstva*. Within this context, *Sibirskii vestnik*’s argument went in the direction of calling for further integration with the core of the empire, while tolerating the

¹²¹ ‘Sudebnaia khronika’, *VO*, 6 November 1888, pp. 6–7 (p. 6).

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹²³ Wirtschafter, ‘Russian Legal Culture’, p. 67.

incompleteness of the process, recognising the Russian state as the force that could accomplish Siberia's ultimate assimilation to the empire's core. On the other hand, Iadrintsev's newspaper understood that the reforms being applied in the metropolis were not necessarily the *panacea* that would solve all their local issues. It appears that regionalists increasingly regarded metropolitan reforms with less sympathy, while embracing solutions that had local context and locals' decisions at the forefront. The discrepancies found here are also explored to understand the solutions they proposed for the future of the region.

Solving Siberian Issues: Bureaucratic Guidance and Upholding Local Initiative

When these newspapers engage in proposing solutions for remedying their shared view of Siberia's crisis, discrepancies again appear. In general, these are related to contrasting images held of the higher bureaucracy between *Sibirskii vestnik* and *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, stressing the beneficial or detrimental influence they had in the region.

From *Sibirskii vestnik*'s perspective, the elimination of differences between European Russia and Siberia's administration would eventually solve the problems affecting the region. In this sense, *Sibirskii vestnik* argued for the necessity of supervision by the correct social elements that could guide Siberia towards a full and trauma-free process of incorporation. In this line, the solutions proposed by *Sibirskii vestnik* have to do with furthering bureaucratic oversight by introducing officials endowed with powers that could ensure a paternalistic protection over Siberia's benighted population. Uyama has recognised the existence of this attitude in Siberian bureaucracy when discussing policies deployed by Tobol'sk's governor Vladimir Aleksandrovich Troĩnitskiĩ (1847–1919). The St. Petersburg-born noble was in favour of curtailing autonomy in western Siberia as:

Zemstvos were not suitable for Tobol'sk province, where peasants were illiterate and underdeveloped, and would be dominated by wealthy peasants and extortioners (*kulaki i miroedy*); land and peasant captains, possessing firm power and being close to the people, had a mission to take

care of peasants, who had been deprived of the landlords' care after the Emancipation Reform of 1861 and left prey to extortioners.¹²⁴

This outlook could be found in the type of policies that were recommended for ending the problems affecting Siberia in *Sibirskii vestnik*. For example, an 1885 *Sibirskii vestnik* article celebrates the implementation of the figure of *chinovniki po krest'ianskim delam* – also referred to as *mirovye posredniki* – in the Altai region in 1878, and later expanded to the rest of Western Siberia in 1883.¹²⁵ This figure was originally created in the build-up towards the emancipation of the serfs in 1861 but eliminated after that in most of the empire. Their original function was to be intermediaries between the peasantry and landowners during the process of emancipation, serving as peasants' advisors and supervising the first steps of communal organs of self-government, which would later function independently.

In *Sibirskii vestnik*'s perspective, these officials had a positive effect as guardians of the peasantry whose interests, in turn, would be protected by having an all-powerful official handling their affairs 'especially by controlling [...] the activities of *volost*' courts'.¹²⁶ These figures provided the peasantry with much-needed paternal supervision by assuming a leading role in peasant communities, and having the prerogative to overrule decisions within the community. As argued in the piece, these functions would be possible as the absence of nobles would give the peasantry the support they needed to handle their business: 'We do not think that *chinovniki po krest'ianskim delam* could evade a new honourable and highly useful duty, under the pretext of being encumbered with work, which is, due to the absence of landowners, incomparably less than those of intermediaries in all central Russia'.¹²⁷

By arguing for these new positions, *Sibirskii vestnik* was anticipating the appearance of the controversial *zemskii nachal'nik* in central Russia a couple of years later, in 1889, who were put in place in *zemstvo* administration as overseeing figures that effectively ended *volost*' courts' independence, among other prerogatives that reinstated the nobility as 'guardians' of the peasantry.¹²⁸ The *chinovniki po krest'ianskim delam* in 1883, who were later replaced by the figure of *krest'ianskii nachal'nik* in 1898, were

¹²⁴ Uyama, 'Repression of Kazakh Intellectuals', p. 694.

¹²⁵ See V. N. Nikulin, 'Chinovniki po krest'ianskim delam zapadnoi Sibiri (1883–1898)', in *Politika i samoderzhavie v Sibiri XIX nachala XX veka* (Irkutsk: Irkutskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 1988), pp. 15–21.

¹²⁶ 'Ot redaktora, 1885 6 iunia', *SV*, 6 June 1885, pp. 1–2 (p. 2).

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ Gaudin, *Ruling Peasants*.

introduced in Siberia to be the bureaucratic all-powerful guide for the peasantry, under the principle of a colonial administration that wished to expand its bureaucratic purview more effectively, rather than developing societal structures. Accordingly, it is possible to argue that Siberia was used as a testing ground for the conservative policies that would later be applied in the rest of the empire. Siberia's lack of societal structures that could potentially resist government's encroachment on administrative autonomy enabled this. *Sibirskii vestnik* wished to address the expansion and penetration of state oversight – a process which had been occurring since the beginning of the period under study – by strengthening the bureaucratic element rather than imagining society as the agent that could perform such an expansion of state purview.

Sibirskii vestnik rhetorically argued for the gradual elimination of differences between the two regions, while tolerating the maintenance of the leading role of the centre as initiator of change, and upholding the autocratic influence on European Russia's societal developments in local governance. In this sense, they favoured the inclusionary and exclusionary methods that characterised colonial governance. On the other hand, *Vostochnoe obozrenie* argued that problems in Siberia could be solved by means other than the strengthening of control over peasant self-government organs or further institutional integration with the metropolis. Rather, Siberia's governance problems needed to address issues in higher echelons of bureaucratic administration, which were seen as hampering the region's development. Therefore, in their view, it was necessary to devise ways of eliminating them from the structure of colonial government, while being aware of local conditions when introducing the necessary changes.

A first step towards that goal was the elimination of the Governors-general from the administration. Iadrintsev wrote in 1882 that 'the Siberian Governor-generalship has long been giving rise to serious criticism'¹²⁹ and is considered the origin and cause of arbitrariness and abuse in the region and should therefore be removed from Siberia's imperial administration. He saw this as the natural cause of Speranskiĭ's reforms in the 1820s which, in his opinion, were well intentioned and originally sought to put in place regulations that would stop the arbitrary rule of the likes of Pestel', Gagarin, and a long tradition of abusive governors governing the region from the onset.¹³⁰ However, Iadrintsev believed that the 1822 reforms were no longer suitable as they failed to provide 'sufficient guarantees of control, as well as the safeguarding of legality. Created in Siberia

¹²⁹ 'Sibirskie voprosy', *VO*, p. 10.

¹³⁰ See Raeff, *Siberia and the Reforms of 1822*.

to establish the rule of law and the correct order of government, and to limit autocracy after Speranskiĭ, they did not fulfil any of their tasks, and on the contrary, they created a system of discretion'.¹³¹

The wide prerogatives given to Governors-general were designed to stop abuse from the top down, as Speranskiĭ had felt the centre could not rely on other social forces to do it from the bottom-up. As explained in a *Vostochnoe obozrenie* article:

[Speranskiĭ] feared that the elective organs would be burdensome for the Siberian inhabitants. 'It would be more correct to form a local government council formed by outsiders, because in Siberia there is no nobility and very few merchants. However, when Siberia's population grows, when its riches come into greater movement and its revenues multiply, then it will be possible to form a council for the main administration from local people of the highest estate, which will make a significant change in the institutions now envisaged'. Thus, Speranskiĭ saw his institutions as transitional, as he was only held back by the fear that in Siberia he would not find educated people for elective organs.¹³²

In this sense, the idea behind the reforms of 1822 that created the figure of Governors-general was to provide the region with a higher bureaucracy comprised of European Russians that would end the region's almost feudal state before the 1820s. However, as argued in *Vostochnoe obozrenie*:

Only a few energetic and able Governors-general rose to the task, while the rest took under their patronage and protection the entire old Siberian regime with all its abuses [...]. When they arrived back in St. Petersburg, they assured authorities that 'everything is going well', that Siberia does not need reforms, that it is not yet ready for them, and everything that is reported about abuses is libel and slander.¹³³

For these reasons, calling for the elimination of the Governors-general in Siberia was considered a solution to the problems affecting the region, an administrative change that finally came about in 1882 when western Siberia stopped being considered a potentially dangerous frontier region, a move considered at the time as a step in the right direction as Siberia would be included in the general administration of the core provinces.

¹³¹ 'Nachalo Sibirskikh reform', *VO*, p. 1.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Therefore, there were hopes that all the institutions prevented from being implemented in Siberia by the region's 'special' status under the administration of Governors-general would now be deployed helping in the development of a civil society. As it was put in *Vostochnoe obozrenie*:

We must only wish that alongside the destruction of the Governors-general, the matter of general transformations in the Siberian provinces should move forward [...] In this way, administrative reform should be seen as a social reform that will ease oppression from satrapy, give more scope for the developed social forces and will create a civil society. That is why public sympathy stands on the side of this reform.¹³⁴

Regionalists' advocacy of the removal of Governors-general rested on the hope that by eliminating an all-powerful figure from local administration, greater societal engagement would be possible. Rather than seeing it as a step toward the equalisation of European Russia and Siberia, it was understood as the end of Siberia's submission to this locally-placed, all-powerful overseeing figure. Finally, it showed locals' appraisal of Siberia's higher bureaucracy. *Oblastniki* also hoped that by being integrated to the imperial core's mode of administration, there would be more room for adjusting policy to local conditions.

That was the case when, in 1882, the discussion about legal reforms started to appear in the press: 'A new land and a new situation should force new adaptations. The closer they want to stick to the once-written letter, the more they will have to postpone the whole reform, or the more difficult it will be to acclimatise the introduction'¹³⁵ claimed *Vostochnoe obozrenie*. The journalist made calls to suppress one of the most important aspects of rural courts: 'On the contrary, the first goal can be achieved by refusing, for example, the dogma of collegiality, and limiting ourselves, in certain cases, to individual judges. The second goal can be achieved by developing the principle of mobility of the court, lying already in the statutes as an embryo'.¹³⁶ Attention to local conditions meant transforming central policies, changing the terms upon which they were built, and vindicating locals' capacity to create policy, to have initiative in order to assert their difference, rather than passively experience difference. The same preoccupation was expressed in 1891 by a regionalist journalist discussing the implementation of judicial

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 3.

¹³⁵ 'Vopros sudebnoĭ reformy na okrainakh', *VO*, 26 August 1882, pp. 2–3 (p. 2).

¹³⁶ Ibid.

reforms: ‘The whole question is only how to implement it in practice. Of course, the easiest way was to introduce the system in place for European Russia, but not everything that is good (assuming that the reformed *volost*’ courts in Russia are now satisfactory) in one place is suitable for the other’.¹³⁷ The attention to local conditions was seen as a space of autonomy that allowed Siberians to assert their difference from the rest of the empire.

In this sense, the discussion about solutions for the shared perception of chaos in Siberia made evident the differences between these two newspapers. Although there was a common desire to improve conditions, the impetus for delivering this improvement was seen to lie on opposite sides of the Urals. *Sibirskii vestnik* provided a perspective that welcomed the exclusionary and inclusionary practices that characterised colonial governance, understanding their relationship to the imperial centre as a continuum in which Siberia needed to catch up. On the other hand, *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, and the regionalist tendencies it argued for, promoted an autonomous solution for the region’s ailments. While recognising the existing differences of their colonial status, they strove to assert them by having an active role in the protection of their cultural particularities. Rather than assimilation and the total elimination of differences, they argued for recognition of the region’s differences and their right to manage them without the encumbrance of metropolitan authorities.

Conclusion

The development of Siberia’s press during the 19th century created one of the most important spaces in which Siberian intellectuals had the opportunity to engage with government officials in local public debates. In a context in which there were no institutions of self-government – and therefore no all-class societal structures endowed with decision-making powers at a provincial level – the expansion of Siberia’s press, from the late 1870s onwards, represented a breakthrough in local intellectuals’ chances of developing their social commitment. Although the regionalist focus of the press started to fade as the 20th century arrived, by debating in the privately-owned press Siberian intellectuals made evident their awareness of the mechanisms that thwarted their development within the imperial polity, and that allowed them to showcase their

¹³⁷ ‘Odna iz neotlozhneishikh nuzhd Sibirskoi derevni’, *VO*, p. 9.

understanding of the colonial nature of the relationship existing between European Russia and Siberia.

Analysis of the press has allowed me to tap into local *intelligenty's* different understandings of Siberia's position within the empire, unveiling the diversity of opinions that emerged among them. These can be gleaned from the debates between Kartamyshev and Iadrintsev's newspapers, in which the underlying assumptions in locals' critiques exposed divergent opinions that can be partially explained by the staff and origins of the newspapers analysed. However, there were also deeper implications, as the arguments deployed on both sides showed an acute understanding of the colonial tenets of imperial governance in the region. This engrained understanding was manifested in *Sibirskii vestnik's* perspective by blaming imperial authorities for Siberia's insufficient assimilation to the empire, and for failing to fully commit to their colonial and civilisational role of integrating Siberia to the European section of the empire. *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, on the other hand, understood Siberian problems as stemming from the imperial government's colonial dominance over the region, and unwillingness to give local intellectuals opportunities to initiate and design Siberian policy. Rather than pressing for further integration with the rest of the empire and pushing for the levelling of inequalities between both imperial spaces, these intellectuals regarded the protection of their differences as their main goal and a recognition of the epistemological validity of their claims. In order to achieve this, they called for their right to have a say in the way that imperial policy shaped their region, which was considered by them as a more achievable goal than total assimilation to the administrative structure of the rest of the empire.

The analysis of these debates becomes a relevant source from which it is possible to understand the way that locals saw their position within the empire and to find the lines that divided Siberia from the European section of the empire. It became the space in which local intellectuals were able to exercise their commitment to their social body as well as denouncing the colonial and bureaucratic principle that governed imperial life in Siberia. Within the press, Siberian intellectuals found the vehicle for engaging in the public life of the empire as well as staking out their willingness to protect their difference.

Chapter 5: Grigoriĭ Zakharovich Eliseev: The Embodiment of Siberian Coloniality

Siberia's colonial condition, as I have shown so far, was a multi-layered experience engrained in the institutional framework that regulated the relationship between European Russia and Siberia. By zooming in and out of Siberia it has been possible to recognise the different dimensions of Siberia's position within the empire and their institutional manifestations. For this reason, this chapter delves now into a concrete and embodied experience of the topics I have been discussing, 'to make elusive things visible and palpable' by looking at the life and trajectory of a Siberian-born intellectual who embodies these elements.¹ Grigoriĭ Zakharovich Eliseev (1821–1891) witnessed many of the changes that came about during the second half of the 19th century and his work and life provide a way of seeing how the different mechanisms of Siberia's colonial position within the empire can be identified in the life of an individual that roamed the expanses of the Russian empire. By looking at his trajectory and the different contexts that shaped his career, I show how the discussions held in previous chapters coalesce in the life of Eliseev, turning his trajectory into 'an allegory for broader issues'.²

Working against the background of the Great Reforms of the 1860s, Eliseev developed his career as a publicist working in different press outlets in St. Petersburg, being part of the development of an *intelligentsiia* that increasingly saw the bureaucratic apparatus as insufficient to account for social and political needs, and that regarded the press and the printed word as an important means to satisfy their need to commit to the improvement of society. This idea was reinforced by his experience as a middle-level bureaucratic official serving in different Siberian towns between 1854 and 1858, an experience that left him with the impression that participating in bureaucratic administration was a dead-end in which the civic responsibility felt by the *intelligentsiia* could not be put in practice thanks to the limits set upon their activities by metropolitan authorities.

¹ Hans Renders, Binne de Haan, and Jonne Harmsma, 'The Biographical Turn: Biography as Critical Method in the Humanities and in Society', in *The Biographical Turn: Lives in History* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2016), pp. 16–28 (p. 24).

² Jill Lepore, 'Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography', *The Journal of American History*, 88.1 (2001), 129–44 (p. 133).

This chapter presents an analysis of Eliseev's life which recognises, at different stages of his career, the aspects of Siberian coloniality that have been uncovered in previous chapters, with the goal of seeing how these elements fuse and are fleshed out in the life of this intellectual. Following Sunderland, I see this as 'personal experience of empire [... that...] has much to tell us about the bigger picture'.³ In order to do so, I draw on a range of sources. I analyse the biographies and notes about Eliseev written by his contemporaries. Specifically, I draw on the work of Lev N. Kleĭnbort (1875–1950), a Russian publicist and participant in the student revolutionary movement at the beginning of the 20th century, who wrote extensively about the history of journalism among Russian *intelligenty*.⁴ I use the biographical sketch written by Nikolaĭ K. Mikhaĭlovskiĭ (1942–1904), a Russian publicist who worked alongside Eliseev editing *Otechestvennye zapiski*, which is particularly useful for getting first-hand details of the author's life. This chapter also draws upon Eliseev's work as a publicist, which was developed in various St. Petersburg newspapers and journals during the second half of the 19th century. *Sovremennik* (The Contemporary), *Iskra* (The Spark), *Otechestvennye zapiski* (Fatherland Notes), *Vek* (Century), and *Vestnik Evropy* (European Herald) were the main outlets for his work during this period, where he published essays and domestic chronicles dealing with social affairs affecting the empire.

This chapter analyses Eliseev's life by dividing it into three main sections. Firstly, I consider his childhood years in Siberia as the son of secular priest, and the education he received as a *popovich*, taking into account the lack of access to higher educational institutions in Siberia that prompted his first experience in European Russia and the discovery of metropolitan life at Moscow university. I then analyse his professional career as an academic in Kazan' and later as a bureaucrat in Siberia's colonial administration in the mid-1850s. I argue that his experience in the administration led to his realisation that social service could not be performed from within imperial structures, an awareness which forced him to travel for a second time westward across the Urals. The last section

³ Willard Sunderland, *The Baron's Cloak: A History of the Russian Empire in War and Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), p. 7.

⁴ See for example Lev N. Kleĭnbort, 'Ianka Kupala', in *Ianka Kupala, sbornik stikhov* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1930), pp. 3–32; Lev N. Kleĭnbort, 'Ivan Vol'nov: zhizn' i tvorchestvo', in *Vol'nov I. E. rasskazy* (Moscow: Nikitinskie subbotniki, 1927), pp. 11–17; Lev N. Kleĭnbort, *Nikolaĭ Ivanovich Ziber* (St. Petersburg: Kolos, 1923); Lev N. Kleĭnbort, *Ocherki rabocheĭ intelligentsii* (St. Petersburg: Nachatki znaniĭ, 1923); See Lev N. Kleĭnbort, *Ocherki rabocheĭ zhurnalistiki (1873–1923)* (St. Petersburg: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1924), among other works.

discusses his work in St. Petersburg and his contribution to provincial life from his position as a journalist.

Childhood and Formation

Grigoriĭ Zakharovich Eliseev was born on 26 January in the town of Spasskoe, Kainsk district in the province of Tomsk, in western Siberia. The year of his birth is a somewhat confusing affair: he claimed to have been born in 1821, whereas records in the Kazan' Spiritual Academy established he was born in 1819, and his service profile stated it was in 1820.⁵ He was the only son of a parish priest who died when Grigoriĭ Zakharovich was still an infant. The death of his father constituted a major setback for the family's economic situation due to his father's spiritual profession. In the Russian Orthodox Church structure, priesthood was divided between a monastic clergy – also referred to as the black clergy on account of their black attire, who were unmarried and occupied the higher positions in the clerical hierarchy – and the secular or 'white' clergy, who were married, allowed to have children and were responsible for the pastoral care of Orthodox believers on a daily basis. Belonging to the white clergy, as Eliseev's family did, also meant being differentiated from the monastic order in that they did not make their living by receiving salaries from the Church structure, as monastic clergy did. The secular clergy were sustained by the contributions that parishioners would voluntarily give to priests for performing everyday rites and sacraments. The *treby* – as these contributions were called – amounted to most of the income of a clerical family, the rest of it being the result of working the land allotted to them as part of their clerical tenure in the town of residence.⁶ This sustenance method had the unwanted consequence of straining the relationship between priests and their flock as, as Laurie Manchester explains, 'disputes over payment of *treby* were a common source of anti-clericalism and spawned the stereotype of the greedy priest'.⁷ When Eliseev's father died, the problems

⁵ *Sochineniia G. Z. Eliseeva v dvukh tomakh, c portretom avtora i vstupil'noi stat'eĭ N. Mikhaĭlovskogo* (Moscow: Izdanie K. T. Soldatenkova, 1894), 1, p. 6.

⁶ See Gregory L. Freeze, 'Handmaiden of the State? The Church in Imperial Russia Reconsidered', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 36.1 (1985), 82–102 (p. 88).

⁷ Manchester, *Holy Fathers, Secular Sons*, p. 23. See also Chris J. Chulos, 'Peasant Perspectives of Clerical Debauchery in Post-Emancipation Russia', *Studia Slavica Finlandensia*, 1995, 33–53, and Gregory L. Freeze, 'A Case of Stunted Anticlericalism: Clergy and Society in Imperial Russia', *European Studies Review*, 13.2 (1983), 177–200.

associated with *treby* went away, but unfortunately so did the source of most of the family income.

This family misfortune left Grigoriĭ Zakharovich in the charge of his mother and grandfather with whom, according to Lev N. Kleĭnbort's biographical account, he enjoyed a happy childhood in which they would go to 'the woods, the countryside, or to the river to fish, while also teaching him to read and write Latin'.⁸ This detail of learning Latin at a young age is quite important as it indicates the differences experienced by sons of secular priests, also called *popovich*, whose belonging to the spiritual *soslovie* entitled them to receive seminary education which, until 1840, was given in Latin.⁹ However, this family arrangement came to an end when his grandfather died, and pressed by monetary circumstances, his mother decided to leave Spasskoe and go to her sister in the town of Tara in the Tobol'sk province of western Siberia. Grigoriĭ Zakharovich's aunt was married to a lower bureaucrat who, receiving only an official stipend, enjoyed a rather austere existence. If their material conditions in Spasskoe were meagre, they only got worse in Tara. And again, misfortune struck the author's life when at the age of nine his mother caught a disease that rapidly took her life, leaving him an orphan who had experienced the loss of most of his close family. However, the networks provided by belonging to a relatively privileged *soslovie* allowed him to spend the rest of his childhood in the seminary, receiving an Orthodox Church education that filled the gap left by his family's untimely deaths.

It was around the year 1830 that Eliseev joined the Seminary School in Tobol'sk, where he spent most of his childhood years in the company of his fellow seminarians. From Kleĭnbort's biographical account it is possible to see that these formative years were not among the happier moments in Eliseev's life. Without many friends and mostly devoted to study, Kleĭnbort says he spent much of his time hidden away and shying from sharing with his classmates, which earned him the nickname *zapechnyĭ*, or behind-the-stove. Kleĭnbort's assertion seems to be confirmed by a later Eliseev work describing the conditions that seminarians endured during their formative years. In this piece, he explained the lack of spiritual vocations in the Orthodox Church as a result of the poor conditions in which seminarians lived, as they had to find a way to give private lessons

⁸ Lev N. Kleĭnbort, *Grigoriĭ Zakharovich Eliseev*, Biograficheskaia biblioteka (St. Petersburg: Kolos, 1923), p. 13.

⁹ Dimitry Pospelovskiy, *The Orthodox Church in the History of Russia* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), p. 142.

on the side to avoid the real and ‘constant danger of dying from hunger’.¹⁰ The reality of seminary education in 19th century Russia was described in harsh terms by contemporaries that went through this educational system. A seminary pupil, Nikolai G. Pomialovskii (1835–1863), described in his *Seminary Sketches* (1863) some of the punishments endured by Goroblagodatsky, one of the students in his account:

They made him kneel on the edge of a slanting desk, they forced him to bow to the ground two hundred times while wearing two wolfskin coats, they sentenced him to hold a heavy rock in an upraised hand for half-hour and longer (needless to say, the administration was inventive), they rapped his palms with a ruler, slapped his cheeks, poured salt on his beaten body (believe me, these are facts).¹¹

Adding to these experiences, Ioann S. Belliustin (1810–1890), a parish priest who described the living conditions of pupils at seminaries in provincial Russia, argued that the conditions students endured meant that ‘those who are weak by nature, simply perish; the healthier ones get off with fevers and other ailments,’ declaring that it was customary for pupils to freeze to death. This might explain Eliseev’s attachment to his school’s stove.¹²

Despite these hardships, Eliseev managed to finish his seminary education at a young age while also being recognised as the best pupil in his generation. In a normal situation, this would have earned him a position in the university in a discipline of his choice, as advanced students from seminary schools could be offered places in higher education institutions with the goal of turning them from the spiritual calling to the body of civil servants, especially in an empire with a growing shortage of bureaucrats. This was after all the same path that one of the most renowned civil bureaucrats of the 19th century, Mikhail Speranskiĭ, followed as a *popovich*.¹³ However, this necessarily meant leaving Siberia, as by the time Eliseev finished school in Tobol’sk, around 1840, this large region was yet to enjoy the benefits of higher education institutions, a situation that only changed in 1888 with the foundation of Tomsk University. As the most advanced student from his school, he dreamt of becoming a military surgeon studying in the

¹⁰ Grigoriĭ Zakharovich Eliseev, *Begstvo seminaristov* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia A. A. Kraevskago, 1876), p. 5.

¹¹ Nikolai G. Pomialovskii, *Seminary Sketches*, trans. by Alfred Kuhn (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), p. 16.

¹² I. S. Belliustin, *Description of the Clergy in Rural Russia: The Memoir of a Nineteenth Century Parish Priest*, trans. by Gregory L. Freeze (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 70.

¹³ See Pospelovsky, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 135.

imperial capitals. However, for unknown reasons, that year's applicants to higher education institutions from spiritual academies were all rejected. Eliseev did not accept this and addressed a petition to the chief procurator of the Holy Synod who heard his request. Nevertheless, his wish to become a military surgeon was declined and instead he was sent to continue his spiritual education in the Moscow Theological Academy.

This trajectory was far from unusual, as there were many examples of Siberians, before and after him, who took the same route: from a provincial elementary educational institution to the capital of the empire, as opportunities and incentives for educated individuals to remain in their regions of origin were scarce, especially in borderland colonies. Stephen Watrous has described this situation when talking about Siberian intellectuals in the 1820s, recalling that Siberian literary figures like Kalashnikov and Batenkov decided to pursue careers in St. Petersburg, a fact which 'illustrates the problem of "intellectual absenteeism", which has plagued Siberia in both 19th and 20th centuries'.¹⁴

This suggests that there was not necessarily a lack of trained people in Siberia, as high-level bureaucrats pointed out throughout the period under study, but a lack of incentives for them to stay and work for their own and their region's benefit. During Eliseev's years in Moscow he studied many subjects, including languages, history, political economy, and juridical sciences.¹⁵ From his memories of this period in the old capital, Eliseev remembered, in an article published in *Vestnik Evropy*, that:

I have never seen in any educational institution that such freedom would be allowed to students both in teaching and in life, as in my time at the Moscow Theological Academy, and I have never seen such gentleness and condescension to the transgressions that sometimes erupted in the otherwise peaceful course of our academic life.¹⁶

The contrast between his harsh formative years in Siberia and the continuation of his studies in Moscow left a lasting impression, which contributed to his later professional development, as he felt attracted to the opportunities being provided in the centre of the empire. As the years of his university education came to an end, he again managed to attain the highest recognitions, graduating at the top of his class in 1844. This allowed him to gain a position as a lecturer in the Moscow Theological Academy, which he held

¹⁴ Watrous, *Russia's 'Land of the Future'*, p. 32.

¹⁵ Kleĭnbort, *G. Z. Eliseev*, p. 15.

¹⁶ *Vestnik Evropy, zhurnal istorii, politiki i literatury* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia M. Stasiulevicha, 1891), CXLVII, pp. 291–92.

only for a year, when a professorship vacancy opened in the Kazan' Theological Academy that he would occupy from 1845 to 1854.

Professional Life, or the Academic Turned Official

Eliseev's years in Kazan' were the crowning moment for a student who, having endured all the harshness of seminary education, had managed to excel from the very beginning of his academic life. The intellectual abilities that had promoted him to the top of his class at every educational level were also recognised by his peers, who spoke of his 'excellent diligence in the performance of his duties'¹⁷. During his period in Kazan', Eliseev conducted research alongside his teaching responsibilities, writing about Orthodox Church history and the spread of Orthodox faith in the Russian heartland. These studies brought him the positive attention of higher Church hierarchies, as Kleĭnbort recalls in his account: 'It was in 1850, by order of the Synod, that a historical-statistical description of the Kazan' Diocese was commissioned. This task was entrusted to Eliseev, and he was provided with money and the opportunity to work in the archives of not only Kazan', but also Petersburg and Moscow'.¹⁸ His reputation as an established scholar was complemented by his positive assessment among colleagues and students. As Nikolaĭ Konstantinovich Mikhaĭlovskiĭ recalled 'Eliseev was respected not only by students, but by his comrades and superiors; indeed, his entire professorial and academic life was a succession of achievements'.¹⁹

Eliseev's positive reputation among students is something that his biographers often refer to when giving accounts of his period in Kazan'. In fact, an article written in 1886 by Nikolaĭ Vasil'evich Shelgunov in the journal *Russkaia mysl'* (Russian Thought) recounts that one of Eliseev's students – Serafim Serafimovich Shashkov, who was a fellow *popovich* who came from Irkutsk in Siberia, and who later developed a career as a publicist – remembered of Eliseev the distinctiveness of 'his rational words in the academy, among the prevailing scholasticism that had existed before him, and the originality of his intellectual explorations, that lead to new possibilities'.²⁰ The affinity

¹⁷ Kleĭnbort, *G. Z. Eliseev*, p. 18.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁹ *Sochineniia G. Z. Eliseeva*, I, p. 7.

²⁰ Nikolaĭ Vasil'evich Shelgunov, 'Iz proshlago i nastoiashchego', *Russkaia mysl'* (Moscow, March 1886), pp. 220–47 (p. 226).

he enjoyed with the younger generations in the Kazan' school aroused suspicion among Eliseev's biographers. Pëtr Vasil'evich Znamenskiï, a Church publicist who wrote a history of the Kazan' Spiritual Academy in 1892, devotes a section to describing the time of Eliseev's tenure in the spiritual institution, saying that 'as for his professorial lectures, they were not very noteworthy in the history of the academy, as a result, perhaps, of the rather dry historical and archaeological nature of his lectures'.²¹ After providing this assessment of Eliseev's scholarly delivery, which should have been unappealing to his students, Znamenskiï goes on to explain the reason behind his popularity, saying that:

Grigoriï Zakharovich's high reputation among students was kind of, one might say, prejudiced, based more on certain qualities of his personality than on the merits of his teaching. As soon as he came to the academy, he was surrounded by the reputation of an extremely intelligent person and a man, moreover, of liberal tendencies.²²

The 'certain' qualities Znamenskiï refers to have to do with the progressive political views Eliseev held, which attracted the young generation of students around him. The conservative Znamenskiï did not necessarily value this aspect of Eliseev's career in Kazan'. It is something that Mikhaïlovskiï disputes, however, saying that his description 'suffers from a certain ambiguity and inconsistency, both with the facts communicated by Mr. Znamenskiï and with those that are known to us from other sources',²³ implying that Eliseev's popularity was both motivated by his talent as a lecturer and the political views he held.

The fact that his reputation became a contested subject is related to the development of Eliseev's political beliefs during the time he spent in Kazan'. Being part of the Orthodox Church, his inclination towards temporal matters, rather than spiritual ones, was considered controversial among his fellow clergymen. During his time in Kazan', Mikhaïlovskiï described the effect produced by his lectures, refuting Znamenskiï's account:

Eliseev's unconventional lectures were always remembered in the memories of his students. And Mr. Znamenskiï, again, knows this himself. For example, in 1850 Eliseev gave several lectures on the Protasov reform

²¹ Pëtr Vasil'evich Znamenskiï, *Istoriia Kazanskoï dukhovnoï akademii za pervyi (doreformennyi) period ee sushchestvovaniia (1842–1870 gody)*, (Kazan': Tipografiia Imperatorskago Universiteta, 1892), p. 109.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 110.

²³ *Sochineniia G. Z. Eliseeva*, 1, p. 6.

of educational institutions and the work of the Bible's translator, Archpriest Pavskii. The students were so electrified by these lectures that for the first time, since the foundation of the academy, applause was heard among a professor's audience. Such an effect, apparently, influenced his 1852 introductory lecture on the course of church history. His talk analysed the life of the privileged classes in Russia, the miserable life of the people and serfdom – subject matter that was, at the time, absolutely forbidden. Such lectures naturally should have aroused enthusiasm among his listeners.²⁴

Eliseev's daring in giving such lectures should be explained further as it helps in understanding the different dimensions of Eliseev's identity and biography. While being a Siberian who experienced the peripherality of a provincial existence, he was also a member of the spiritual *soslovie*, which provided privileges and an awareness of empire-wide issues that were not necessarily in his fellow countrymen's immediate horizon. Therefore, his explorations of and involvement with the issues that were affecting the internal structure of the Orthodox church were relevant for his questioning of Siberia's position within the empire and the role provinces should have, topics he would later develop as a journalist.²⁵

The clerical education system in which Eliseev grew up, as the son of a parish priest and a member of the spiritual *soslovie*, consisted of a structure parallel to that of the state and one always considered beneath the standard of the civil education that mostly nobles but also other imperial subjects received in state institutions.²⁶ Eliseev discussed this in a later article when talking about the loss of students from the seminaries and the measures being taken to stem this flow. In his view, 'the aforementioned ministerial order can only be interpreted as the official recognition that general education in seminaries is of a lower quality than all other secondary schools,'²⁷ a situation that was already being recognised in the early 1830s.²⁸ In fact, during the period in which Eliseev studied and worked within Church educational institutions, there were reformist movements coming

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²⁵ See Scott C. Matsushita Bailey, 'A Biography in Motion: Chokan Valikhanov and His Travels in Central Eurasia', *Ab Imperio*, 2009.1 (2009), 165–90; I. Gerasimov, Ilya and others, 'From the Editors: Homo Imperii Revisits the "Biographic Turn"', *Ab Imperio*, 2009.1 (2009), 17–21; Michael Khodarkovsky, 'The Return of Lieutenant Atarshchikov: Empire and Identity in Asiatic Russia', *Ab Imperio*, 2009.1 (2009), 149–64. In these works the authors discuss the value of biographical approaches in the study of colonial contexts, and the multiple layers of identity that cross individuals' lives.

²⁶ See Freeze, 'Handmaiden of the State?'

²⁷ Eliseev, *Begstvo*, p. 8.

²⁸ Belliustin is of the same opinion when he refers to the quality of teachers in the seminary compared to civil schools. See Belliustin, *Description of the Clergy in Rural Russia*, p. 72.

from both the Holy Synod and church publicists that were intended to improve the quality of the education received by the white clergy. The Protasov reforms, being introduced in 1836 by the newly appointed chief procurator of the Holy Synod, Nikolaï Aleksandrovich Protasov, were an integral part of this, as they sought to restructure seminary education in order to better combat what was seen as the ignorance that reigned in rural Russia²⁹ The intention was to provide the white clergy with instruments better suited to engage with life among rural parishioners. In that sense, the reform promoted dropping subjects related to the perceived scholasticism of church education, which was still carried out in Latin, to promote subjects that were needed by their flocks. The study of agronomy, medicine and pedagogy were introduced while Latin grammar, metaphysics and the history of philosophy were dropped. All this was done in order to ‘enhance the priest’s role and status in the local community,’³⁰ by introducing a more utilitarian outlook to clerical education, that would enable a more effective engagement with the temporal needs of Orthodoxy across the Russian empire.

Under this atmosphere of changes taking place within the structure of the Orthodox Church, Eliseev’s academic pulpit provided him with the opportunity to address the issues that were affecting the white clergy in Russia. The Protasov reforms were resisted among the monastic upper hierarchy of the Church, who saw in this a further intrusion of the state in clerical affairs. However, from the point of view of the white clergy, these reforms pointed in the direction of the changes that were needed to improve the condition of an otherwise neglected body of clergymen. In 1839, the rural priest Ioann S. Belliustin made this point clear when assessing the usefulness of his education for his position among peasant parishioners:

For a whole six years the boy wastes his abilities on the study of a language he will forget in the first two years of priesthood, for in all his life he will not encounter a single letter of that language.³¹

As with the Protasov reforms, the unauthorised translation of the Bible to Russian from Church Slavonic – the official language used by the Russian Orthodox Church – by the archpriest Gerasim Petrovich Pavskii, that was illegally circulating in lithographic

²⁹ See Gregory L. Freeze, *The Parish Clergy in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Crisis, Reform, Counter-Reform* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 125.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

³¹ Belliustin, *Description of the Clergy in Rural Russia*, p. 79.

copies, generated a widespread polemic in this period.³² Although it was initially only meant for pedagogical ends, it unleashed deeper consequences as the possibility of developing further biblical studies was now opened to people beyond the spiritual *soslovie*. Nevertheless, the dissemination of these copies was prohibited and finally censored, a policy supported by conservative elements in the Orthodox Church and reinforced by the traditionalist atmosphere of Nicholas I's reign. This case's eruption gives us a sense of the background against which Eliseev was working, a period in which there was a perceived restlessness among the white clergy in the Church. Therefore, addressing these matters in the Kazan' Spiritual Academy had an important political significance among the students attending Eliseev's lectures, as it was the place to open the debate on the position of the white clergy within the Church and the wider imperial panorama.

As Laurie Manchester has pointed out, 'the spirit of social activism [...] became particularly widespread during the era immediately preceding the Great Reforms'³³ among the clergy, who saw their involvement with society as one of their highest moral duties.³⁴ The pastoral care movement, begun in the 1840s,³⁵ espoused these views, and saw active engagement with society, whether from secular or clerical positions, as a high moral virtue, providing the context to Eliseev's reconsideration of his spiritual vocation. As Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter has argued, 'prelates and theologians preached the duty of the church to emulate Christ by entering "into this world."' ³⁶ Eliseev wrote in an essay about those years in Kazan' that 'my ideals were completely different and in no way coincided with the idle and lazy existence of our white clergy. And besides, I didn't have any firm religious beliefs'.³⁷ This attitude is confirmed by the acknowledgement that Eliseev only found comfort among the young cohort of professors teaching in Kazan'. His immediate social circle was formed by people like A. P. Shchapov, and Serafim S. Shashkov, fellow Siberian *popovich*.³⁸ According to Kleĭnbort's account,

³² See Stephen K. Batalden, 'Gerasim Pavskii's Clandestine Old Testament: The Politics of Nineteenth-Century Russian Biblical Translation', *Church History*, 57.4 (1988), 486–98.

³³ Laurie Manchester, 'The Secularization of the Search for Salvation: The Self-Fashioning of Orthodox Clergymen's Sons in Late Imperial Russia', *Slavic Review*, 57.1 (1998), 50–76 (p. 61).

³⁴ See Vera Shevzov, *Russian Orthodoxy on the Eve of Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

³⁵ Manchester, *Holy Fathers, Secular Sons*, p. 19.

³⁶ Wirtschafter, *Social Identity in Imperial Russia*, p. 57.

³⁷ Quoted in Kleĭnbort, *G. Z. Eliseev*, p. 20.

³⁸ As Derek Offord has pointed out, 'one social feature of the militant young faction of the intelligentsia which requires comment is the prominence among them of the sons of the lower clergy'. Offord, *Nineteenth Century Russia*, p. 47.

Only here, in this circle, could Eliseev be himself. ‘Here and for the first time, we learned who Eliseev was,’ one member of the group later recalled. But if this was the atmosphere in a place like Kazan’, then in the centres of literary and intellectual life everything must have been teeming with the spirit of the coming reforms. And it was there that Grigorii Zakharovich was being drawn to, to being involved with a living cause.³⁹

The decade of the 1850s in Russia was one of expectation and Eliseev was increasingly dreading the prospect of a dull life in the spiritual *soslovie*. He saw his place in the world as connected with the great social upheavals that were beginning to be felt in the pre-reform era. In a later essay written about this period, Eliseev recalled that:

Other, more seductive thoughts flashed through my head. I was young, or at least young enough that I felt able to withstand a full course of study. I was thirsting for knowledge and to participate in the intellectual life, which, in my opinion, was then concentrated in Moscow, and I was drawn to give up my professorship at the academy altogether, to enter Moscow University. If I had had the opportunity to secure my finances to provide for four years in the university, I would have certainly put this thought into practice. But I could not think about this seriously. [...] I did not have any other sources of income. I could not think about any bank loans, even for the shortest time and the smallest amount. Therefore, I was bound to stay where I was [...] However, each new year of work in Kazan’ increased rather than lessened the inadequacy of my material means [...]. And this made me less likely to go back to study.⁴⁰

This context and concerns were a burden that afflicted Eliseev’s life during these years. The ivory tower position in which he found himself, being then at the apex of the academic world within the spiritual *soslovie*, brought him to a state of restlessness that pushed him to look further afield in order to address the anxiety he was experiencing. As part of a generation that defined their identities not in individualistic terms, but in connection with the society around them, as the growing Russian *intelligentsiia* understood themselves, he felt that his contribution in the academic sphere was already fulfilled, and he needed to make himself useful elsewhere. As Laurie Manchester has argued, this generation rejected ‘the Western liberal ethos whereby individuals set

³⁹ Kleĭnbort, *G. Z. Eliseev*, p. 21.

⁴⁰ Quoted in *Sochineniia G. Z. Eliseeva*, I, p. 12.

themselves against society, because *intelligenty* derived their identity from their role in society'.⁴¹ It was then that Eliseev's decision to enter civil service in Siberia appeared as the solution to his concerns. As Mikhailovskiĭ described it:

He declined all these prospects and then embarked on the usual everyday life of the average poor Russian man who possesses an education, and who is not heated by any special sun. He lost himself in the impersonal mass of the bureaucracy, but in the process, he got rid of the internal contradictions that had torn him.⁴²

In 1854, Eliseev decided to leave the academy, finishing his academic career for good and renouncing his civil status as *popovich*. His next step was to get involved in the changes that were taking place in the empire, by entering the civil service in Siberia.

During the short period in which he served in the imperial administration in Siberia, from 1854 to December 1857, he was placed in various towns and positions as a middle-level bureaucrat, an appointment he obtained given his educational level. Although the only official information about Eliseev's presence in Siberian colonial administration comes from his laconic service record (*formuliarnyi spisok*), Mikhailovskiĭ offers in his biographical sketch an account of the places and positions he held during this period:

He was first district chief (*okruzhnoi nachal'nik*) in Omsk, and later in Tarskiĭ, from where he went to become an adviser (*sovetnik gubernskogo pravleniia*) to the Tobol'sk provincial government. In these positions he performed diverse tasks, mainly serving among the peasantry; and it was these peasants who acquainted him with the everyday lives of the rural population, which later on would become so useful to him when writing his 'Internal Reviews' in *Sovremennik* and *Otechestvennye zapiski*.⁴³

Being involved with peasant management in the imperial administration in Siberia allowed Eliseev, as Mikhailovskiĭ mentions, to get to know the realities of the peasant population, their daily concerns and the conditions they endured within the legal and practical framework set by the state. A good example of this is an article published in *Iskra* in 1861, where he ironically refers to liberals' faith in the spread of educational establishments as the means to carry peasants out of their backward existence. However,

⁴¹ Manchester, *Holy Fathers, Secular Sons*, p. 5.

⁴² *Sochineniia G. Z. Eliseeva*, I, p. 16.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

he questions liberals' methods for achieving such a goal, which involved instructing peasants to set up *volost*' schools. He says that 'there is no doubt that there were many peasants who, appreciating education, were happy with such orders, but the majority were on the opposite side, especially when the unheard-of innovation of teaching girls reached peasant parents'⁴⁴

Additionally, his engagement with Siberia's provincial realities would instil in him the desire to avoid the misrepresentation of regional life present in metropolitan journals. In an 1858 article published in *Sovremennik*, Eliseev wrote about the portrayals of the provinces being made by unknown authors saying that:

I think that the inhabitants of different cities and towns in Russia, having sometimes read an article about their hometown or village, first come to be quite puzzled, asking themselves: "Where did the author get all this from? Where did he see this? Yes, that is nothing like us!" And then they will get together, laugh at what has been written, and forget about the matter.⁴⁵

The experience he gained working in provincial Russia would allow him to bridge the gap existing between the metropolis and the provinces, to challenge the fictitious images of Russian provincial backwaters that were held in the capitals of the empire.

However, I argue that the most important aspect of his short-lived career as an imperial bureaucrat in Siberia was that he got to know first-hand the inner workings of the imperial structure, the possibilities that were available within it, and the limits of its power. It was during this period as a bureaucrat that he became convinced that a career in the bureaucratic service would not quench his thirst for social engagement, that his intention to get involved with the social issues that were unravelling throughout the empire could not be addressed from his position in official service.

Eliseev's decision to leave the academic realm to go into a civil service career might seem a rather odd choice for someone coming from the spiritual *soslovie*. Laurie Manchester has argued in her book about the fate of *popovichi* in 19th century Russia that Church publicists and hierarchies regarded leaving clerical structures positively. They encouraged the sons of priests to go into the secular world to act as ambassadors of clerical

⁴⁴ Referenced in Grigorii Zakharovich Eliseev, 'Khronika progressa', in *Russkii fel'eton*, ed. by K. G. Boiko (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1958), pp. 219–27 (p. 227).

⁴⁵ Grigorii Zakharovich Eliseev, 'O Sibiri', *Sovremennik* (St. Petersburg, December 1858), Tipografiia Karl Vulf edition, section Vol. 72, pp. 161–208 (p. 161).

values outside the closed – and caste like – world of the Russian Orthodox Church.⁴⁶ However, pursuing a secular career and representing pastoral ideals did not mean following a strictly individual path towards self-realisation. In the eyes of the church, as was presented in a pastoral theology manual published for seminarians in 1860, one priest wrote:

I pity anyone who chooses a particular profession only in order to possess the means of his livelihood. He will never be satisfied with his position. He will not be able to fill the emptiness in his heart with anything. Boredom and some kind of vague gnawing will torment him. His end will be horrible because he will realise that he was a useless and superfluous component of society.⁴⁷

In this sense, going into the world meant transferring their priestly duties to whichever occupation *popovichi* would undertake. However, ‘in the eyes of Church publicists and hierarchs, some secular professions epitomised this mission of saving society more than others. Because teaching was part of priestly duties, the pedagogical vocation came closest to replicating clerical service’.⁴⁸ On the contrary, as Manchester argues, ‘a bureaucratic career [...] was at the bottom of the list. They associated bureaucracy with corruption and abuse of power and preferred to have *popovichi* serve the citizens of the fatherland directly rather than through noble-dominated state institutions’.⁴⁹ This attitude towards bureaucratic staff can be seen in Dmitrii I. Rostislavov’s (1809–1877) account of provincial life written in the 1870s. This fellow *popovich* described the Governor-general of Riazan, Aleksandr D. Balashov, as ‘an honest man while he was in Riazan. He had already made quite a fortune as police chief of Petersburg, so in Riazan he could afford to be, or at least appear to be, honest. But not all of his associates were indifferent to the lure of money’.⁵⁰

It turned out that Eliseev had to discover that truth for himself during the time he spent in Siberia’s imperial administration. In an article published in June 1875 in the journal *Otechestvennye zapiski*, Eliseev gave an insight into the problem of administration in Siberia, which must have influenced his decision to leave imperial bureaucracy and

⁴⁶ See Hosking, *Russia, People and Empire*, p. 231.

⁴⁷ Nikolaï G. Bogoslavskii, *Vzgliad s prakticheskoi storony na zhizn' sviashchennika: pis'ma otsa k synu* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Eduarda Veimara, 1860), pp. 4–5.

⁴⁸ Manchester, *Holy Fathers, Secular Sons*, p. 160.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

⁵⁰ Dmitrii I. Rostislavov, *Provincial Russia in the Age of Enlightenment, The Memoir of a Priest's Son*, trans. by Alexander M. Martin (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002), p. 198.

look for other occupations. In this ‘Internal Review’ article, which covered different aspects of imperial life in Russia – writing under the pseudonym Grytsko – he discussed the plans for creating a university in Siberia, a project that was being pushed by the newly appointed Governor-general of western Siberia, Adjutant General Kaznakov. In his argument, Eliseev pointed out that the ultimate goal that the government was pursuing with the foundation of a Siberian university was to ‘multiply the number of educated people in Siberia’.⁵¹ However, he challenged this analysis by saying that:

It seems to us that those who think that founding a university will help to achieve this goal are greatly mistaken. [...] There have always been a lot of people in Siberia who wanted to get a higher education, and there were many who have received it, even without financial help from the government, but none of these people remained in Siberia. What usually happens is that most of them leave for Russia and here they chose one or another kind of activity. And this was not happening at all because Siberians did not want to stay in their homeland. On the contrary, I do not know people who love being in their own country like Siberians do, and I’m sure that each of them, with maybe a few exceptions, would immediately return to Siberia if they had the chance.⁵²

Eliseev made the case that the problems Siberia experienced, on account of the shortage of able people to whom government duties could be entrusted, had nothing to do with the lack of people prepared to take these positions. On the contrary, this problem was the result of the absence of possibilities for Siberians to develop their professional careers in the region.

Eliseev explained further the issue of intellectuals’ absenteeism in the region when he described the reasons behind Siberians’ exodus to the European section of the empire, even if there was the chance to serve in the administration:

Siberians, for the most part, are capable people, and have been accepted in [European] Russia with open arms, however they are usually rejected for work in Siberia. Every Governor-general – every provincial governor even – that goes to Siberia, knows this country so little that he imagines that its natural inhabitants would mainly consist of Tungus, Ostiaks, Samoyeds, exiles and convicts, and that his main mission is to

⁵¹ *Sochineniia G. Z. Eliseeva*, I, p. 439.

⁵² *Ibid.*

enlighten and control Siberia. As a result, the rulers of Siberia have usually brought with them the darkness of Russian officialdom, most of them career seekers looking for easy money and, generally, simply rogues. These officials have occupied all the most important and influential posts on the ladder of the Siberian official hierarchy.⁵³

The reality Eliseev conveyed in this article represented the same kind of barriers he hit when working in Siberia's imperial administration. The path that a Siberian bureaucrat could follow within the administrative structure was systematically curtailed in favour of officials coming from European Russia, who perpetuated patronage networks that came from the capital. Moreover, Eliseev's concerns with the lack of both knowledge about the region and motivation to engage seriously and wholeheartedly with the administration of the region made him believe that the body of bureaucrats in Siberia's imperial administration conceived of their positions as sources of revenue rather than as opportunities to improve the conditions of the locals.

Eliseev also gives insight into another aspect of the mechanism that sustained the allocation of higher position in Siberia's imperial administration. The preference given to metropolitan officials over locals was officially recognised in the system of privileges that were conceded to bureaucrats from European Russia coming to work in Siberia. Eliseev described its functioning:

And material benefits for their service, codified in laws for a very long time, were granted to them. When they [European Russians] decide to serve in Siberia, they receive an additional annual salary, double travel allowances, and a third of a salary increment for every five years of service in Siberia; for them, the period for pensions was considered three years in four. To such privileges, and most importantly, to the influential position enjoyed by the aforementioned officials, can Siberians with a higher education remain indifferent? That is impossible.⁵⁴

Eliseev's assessment of the system of financial privileges that were granted to European Russian officials serving in Siberia helped him to understand the lack of enthusiasm to go into the imperial service among Siberians with educational qualifications. He understood that the existing framework created incentives that were difficult to overcome, producing clear barrier for locals' progression in administrative

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

hierarchies that maintained the colonial division of labour that was central to Siberia's colonial status.

The lack of prospects available to Siberian officials serving in the bureaucracy took its toll on Eliseev, as during this period the author fell into a depressive state that pushed him to seek solace in alcohol. As narrated by Kleĭnbort, who follows Mikhaĭlovskii's account:

Of course, Grigoriĭ Zakharovich did not find anything here [in Siberian colonial administration], neither for the soul, nor for the mind, nothing that would lead him out of this hopelessness. Mikhaĭlovskii narrates what a dead end it was: 'And this is one of those very situations in which people fall to drink, in which they damage their minds, and ultimately put a bullet in their foreheads. [...] But apparently, this misfortune hung over him only for a very short time; for he was too balanced to give in to this weakness'.⁵⁵

The lack of opportunities and influence to exercise his willingness to serve and to find a social role that could help in defining his identity, prompted Eliseev to reconsider the path he should follow. The political beliefs he developed during his time in Moscow and Kazan' were useless in the monotonous and despondent atmosphere of Siberian administration. And he saw the road back to European Russia as the more effective way to reconcile his personal ambition with his social responsibility.

Eliseev decided to put an end to his strivings in the imperial bureaucracy as he felt he had already reached the limit of the possibilities available to locals serving in their region. It must have become evident to Eliseev that further attempts to progress in colonial hierarchies were costing him dearly and that they were ultimately a pointless effort. For these reasons, he decided to leave behind, once again, his native homeland and cross the Urals westward in search of a role that would suit his ambition to serve society.

The Publicist

Eliseev discovered during his time in the colonial administration that being in Siberia gave him few opportunities to pursue his interest of participating in the changes and the atmosphere of reform that was being felt throughout the empire. He therefore

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 22–23.

made the choice to leave his homeland in order to achieve his goal of being able to have an impact on the direction of the Russian empire on the eve of the Great Reforms. As Mikhaïlovskiï expressed it:

Eliseev left his post and arrived in 1858 in St. Petersburg. Apparently, he came without any plans, simply attracted by the light of the dawn, which then was rising above all of Russia, but was most clearly felt in Petersburg, or at least, so it seemed to every provincial inhabitant. About literature as a profession, in any case, he did not initially consider it.⁵⁶

His decision to leave Siberian service can be explained by the bleak prospects he had within that occupation and the possibilities that were being opened in the centre. As Eliseev explained it, he saw this period as the time when finally ‘the shackles upon thought and words are being removed, when the best people, blessed by the new and beneficial light that arises over the Russian people, can devote their words and thoughts to the service of the fatherland with love’.⁵⁷

However, his choice to go to St. Petersburg also needs to be accounted for, as that decision tells us about the geographical hierarchies that were in place to frame political agency in the empire. Realising that a position within the civil service, as low as it might have been, was more inconsequential than the certain prospect of professional and financial uncertainty in the capital, gives us a glimpse of the geographical configuration of the coloniality experienced by Siberians.⁵⁸ Mikhaïlovskiï’s reference to the dawn being felt more strongly in Petersburg, at least for imperial subjects from outside the core regions, introduces questions about the colonial construction of space and, consequently, the location of political agency, as limited as it was under Russian autocracy. As Allison Smith has argued regarding the value of *soslovie* categories in the imperial social structure, there were also geographical considerations that made spatial movement a critical decision for people that wanted to improve their situation. In her words, ‘a second geographical distinction also implied status: towns were of high status, but the capitals – Moscow and St. Petersburg – were the highest of all’.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 17.

⁵⁷ Eliseev, ‘O Sibiri’, p. 167.

⁵⁸ See Mark Bassin, ‘Russia between Europe and Asia: The Ideological Construction of Geographical Space’, *Slavic Review*, 50.1 (1991), 1–17. See also Mark Bassin, Christopher Ely, and Melissa K. Stockdale, *Space, Place, and Power in Modern Russia: Essays in the New Spatial History* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010).

⁵⁹ Smith, *For the Common Good and Their Own Well-Being*, p. 35.

In Smith's view, these geographical distinctions were an integral part of the *soslovie* identities forged in the imperial system, a fact which further underlines the complexity of the social structure of the Russian empire, and the inadequacy of *soslovie*'s legal distinctions to fully capture the empire's social makeup. I argue that these geographical distinctions also complicated the colonial order that structured the Russian empire. Following Michael Hechter's study on internal colonisation, the distribution of social and political tasks and the limitations imposed on subjects coming from peripheral regions points towards the creation and recreation of differences between geographical spaces and identities. The positions Eliseev held in Siberia – as a seminary student and an imperial official – were the catalysts in his decision to move to European Russia, the place where he got his university education and the recognition as a scholar that moved his career forward. Simultaneously, his territorial movement does not take him to other colonised regions of the empire, a decision that highlights his understanding of the distribution of political power through the empire. In this sense, Hechter argues that the metropolitan power 'seeks to regulate the allocation of social roles such that those roles commonly defined as having high status are generally reserved for its members. Conversely, individuals from the less advanced group tend to be denied access to those roles'.⁶⁰ In a way, the experience of being systematically excluded from Siberia's administration through bureaucratic means instilled in Eliseev the idea that it was a worthwhile endeavour to go to the capital where, as he mentioned when describing the absence of educated Siberians, a talented person could find a position that was suited to their talents and motivations. In Kleĭnbort's words:

And so, no matter how risky it was to leave civil service – which, regardless of how bad it was, provided a livelihood – Eliseev again leaves his position and in 1858, without having plans and simply attracted by the new times that were being felt in the capital, arrives in Petersburg.⁶¹

Upon arriving in the imperial capital, Eliseev started to seek a means to employ himself and find a place in which he could engage with the reforms that were being discussed after the disaster in Crimea and the assumption of power by Alexander II. According to an anecdote written by Eliseev and quoted in a 1904 history of Russian censorship by Mikhail Konstantinovich Lemke, a chance encounter gave him the direction he was looking for. Eliseev wrote:

⁶⁰ Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, p. 39.

⁶¹ Kleĭnbort, *G. Z. Eliseev*, p. 23.

I happened to have dinner several times in one small tavern on Morskaia street, where usually fifteen or more people gathered for their meal, all intelligent people — officials, sailors, etc... And among them, on the day the latest issue of *Iskra* was being released – maybe a couple of days after that – a young man from the civil service, who dined there constantly and who was apparently familiar with everyone, was there. At some point, he took out the issue of *Iskra* from his pocket and began to read almost the whole journal, explaining the caricatures, whom they depicted, and the reasons for their appearance. He talked about the articles, the difficulties met with censorship bodies, and so on and so forth. Everyone that was present listened attentively, made objections, and demanded explanations when they were needed. And he answered all questions and objections and gave the required explanations. Apparently, he was *au courant* with all that was done in *Iskra*. I was then convinced that this man worked or collaborated in some way with *Iskra*, that he was close to the editorial office and that these lunchtime declamations were being made with the knowledge of the editorial board for increasing the distribution of the journal. It turned out this was not the case. Shortly after this episode, I met the editor of *Iskra*, V. S. Kurochkin, at his home, where I also met the other *Iskra* editor, Stepanov, but neither of them had any information about unknown volunteers acting on their behalf. Both assured me that they did not have such people and that it had not even occurred to them to use that kind of propaganda for the dissemination of *Iskra*, which was already a very hard task.⁶²

The context in which this anecdote took place – that is, the group of people dining in the small tavern – is related to the expansion and consolidation of a social category that received much attention during the second half of the 19th century, as well as in historiography about Russia. The *intelligentsiia* that developed throughout this period, can be widely understood as a group of individuals that were aware of the gulfs that were splitting Russian society – the separation between ruler and society, of a westernised nobility and an Orthodox peasantry, of urban educated Russians and the sea of illiterate rural life, and so on – and were committed to bridge the gap, and stop what were

⁶² Mikhail Konstantinovich Lemke, *Ocherki po istorii Russkoĭ tsenzury i zhurnalistiki XIX stoletii* (St. Petersburg: Trud, 1904), p. 51.

conceived as the injustices that prevailed in Russia's social structure.⁶³ The characteristics that Manchester attributed to *popovichi*, when discussing the religious values that sons of clergymen transferred to their secular lives, are very aptly connected by Leatherbarrow and Offord's definition of the Russian *intelligentsiia* when, quoting Isaiah Berlin, they refer to the *intelligentsiia* as 'almost a secular priesthood, devoted to the spreading of a specific attitude to life, something like a gospel'.⁶⁴ The responsibility that this group felt towards their society turned into 'an awareness of, and commitment to, the Russian people,'⁶⁵ which became a shared feeling among the people who defined themselves as *intelligenty*. As Lovell has argued, Russia's *intelligentsiia* developed a generational self-understanding that became greater than class, nationality or religion as categories of self-description. Eliseev epitomised this attitude as his decisions led him away from the path of his birth *soslovie* in order to embrace his generation's ambitions.⁶⁶

Additionally, the episode with the young man in the tavern allowed Eliseev to recognise his own eagerness to get involved and put into practice his commitment to society. As an *intelligent* with a mission to serve society, he witnessed the true depth and reach of the work being done in journalism at the time. The satirical journal *Iskra* (1859–1873), for which he would later work writing essays and columns about internal affairs, represented for him a vehicle for kindling the social engagement that was needed to move towards social change and reform. Watching this passionate young man, who had no vested interest in doing what he did, convinced him that the printed word was the medium to access civil society, to debate and question the existing order. The nascent public sphere that was developing, after censorship laws were relaxed in the first years of the reign of Alexander II, convinced him that his talents could be put to good use by getting involved in journalism. As Fedyashin has argued regarding the importance of journals in 19th century Russia, 'the absence of a political sphere magnified their influence'.⁶⁷

⁶³ Hosking, *Russia, People and Empire*, p. 264.

⁶⁴ *A History of Russian Thought*, ed. by William Leatherbarrow and Derek Offord (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 5.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7. See also Gary M. Hamburg, 'Russian Intelligentsias', in *A History of Russian Thought*, ed. by William Leatherbarrow and Derek Offord (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 44–71.

⁶⁶ See Stephen Lovell, 'From Genealogy to Generation: The Birth of Cohort Thinking in Russia', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 9.3 (2008), 567–94; and Ben Eklof and Tatiana Saburova, *A Generation of Revolutionaries: Nikolai Charushin and Russian Populism from the Great Reforms to Perestroika* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017).

⁶⁷ Anton A. Fedyashin, *Liberals under Autocracy: Modernization and Civil Society in Russia, 1866–1904* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), p. 71. See also *Literary Journals in Imperial Russia*, ed. by Deborah A. Martinsen (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

The importance that Eliseev attached to the literary world being developed in the journals was more clearly stated in a chronicle he wrote for *Iskra* in 1862. In this piece, he states that:

The times when literary fame could be acquired with a clever phrase, a smooth verse, brilliant wit, or even by just writing and storytelling were over. Now everyone, even those who did not study at the seminary, knows that talent that has no sincere desire to serve the public cause does not deserve any respect, and talent that uses its strength to destroy this cause is worthy of full contempt.⁶⁸

Eliseev's stressed this point in different occasions, as when in 1866 he published an article criticising the recently-released novel *Crime and Punishment* by Fiodor M. Dostoevskii. In his opinion, the Natural School's mission of turning everyday reality into a topic worthy of depiction, had transformed in Dostoevskii's work into 'the aimlessness of artistic images, copying reality just in order to show their art of copying,' an endeavour that left Grigorii Zakharovich asking 'What reasonable goal can be used to justify such a plot for a novel?'⁶⁹

It is from 1859 onwards that we see Eliseev fully immersed and established in St. Petersburg's literary world, with *Iskra* and *Sovremennik* being his first positions, writing essays and publishing columns on local affairs (*Vnutrennie obzory*) on a regular basis. As had happened with his academic career at earlier stages of his life, his employers were quick to realise that Grigorii Zakharovich possessed a sharp mind that communicated fluently with his pen. Thus, it did not take him long to make a name for himself among the publicists in the city and soon after his arrival he had become a recognised writer among literary circles. In fact, upon his arrival at *Iskra*, he soon gained the confidence of Stepanov and Kurochkin, the journal's editors, who, according to Lemke, 'valued the authoritative word of Eliseev very highly, and complex editorial issues were often decided with his advice and directions'.⁷⁰ The appreciation of Eliseev's contribution to journalistic life was not confined to *Iskra* and *Sovremennik*, as a couple of years later, in 1861, he was invited by Mikhail Nikiforovich Katkov, the conservative journalist entrepreneur, to take

⁶⁸ Quoted in Lemke, *Ocherki*, p. 123.

⁶⁹ Grigorii Zakharovich Eliseev, 'O romane "Prestuplenie i nakazanie"', in *Kritika 60-kh godov XIX veka*, ed. by Lev I. Sobolev (Moscow: Astrel', 2003), pp. 348–54 (pp. 348, 353). See also Grigorii Zakharovich Eliseev, 'Gogol'. Iz postmertnykh bumag', in *Russkoe bogatsvo: ezhemesiachnyi literaturnyi i nauchnyi zhurnal. № 1* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia N. N. Klobukova, 1902), pp. 37–71 where Eliseev criticises the religious direction the author followed in his final years.

⁷⁰ Lemke, *Ocherki*, p. 48.

charge of the 'Contemporary Chronicle' section of a renewed version of *Russkiĭ vestnik* (Russian Herald). Katkov was already known as a defender of what he perceived were the historical rights of the nobility, as the debates around serfs' emancipation raged in the metropolitan press. Eliseev recalled in a personal letter:

That was his outright tendency back in 1861, as he himself told me then, adding that Kavelin [a liberal publicist] agreed to help him in this, along with other intellectuals, who were not named. Anyhow, I was not interested in knowing who they were as Katkov's views were disgusting to me, so I refused to participate in the 'Contemporary Chronicle' published in his periodical.⁷¹

Refusing Katkov at an early stage of his journalistic career can be seen as a bold move, especially if we consider that Katkov was a well-connected and influential editor. Many of the great literary figures of the era worked under his guidance during this period, as Fedyashin explains: 'Because of his ties to officialdom, Katkov enjoyed protection and could outbid his competitors for the leading literary talents of the age: Leo Tolstoy, Fiodor Dostoevskii, Mikhaĭl Saltykov-Shchedrin, Ivan Turgenev, Alekseĭ Pisemskii and Nikolaĭ Leskov among others'.⁷² However, his decision to reject Katkov's offer was a political statement that was reinforced by his decision to keep working in *Iskra*, *Sovremennik* and *Otechestvennye zapiski* – where Eliseev would later be employed –, journals that were positioned on the left of the Russian political spectrum. Although Eliseev could be positioned within the moderate left in Russia's 19th century political landscape – Walicki defined him as a legal populist – the political dimension of this decision 'proved yet again how tightly socio-political sensibilities intertwined with literature in Russia'.⁷³ Eliseev even accuses Katkov's journalistic activities of being a bad example of what *glasnost*' had achieved in Russia, where instead of being used for denouncing and debating ideas, it was employed to 'indulge in villainy and spread gossip, and slander'.⁷⁴

During his first years in St. Petersburg, Eliseev had the chance to participate in various journalistic ventures, such as his tenure at *Vek* (Century) in 1862 and his brief stint as editor of the journal *Ocherki* (Essays) in 1863. However, the political tendency

⁷¹ Quoted in Kleĭnbort, *G. Z. Eliseev*, p. 25.

⁷² Fedyashin, *Liberals under Autocracy*, p. 72.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 91. For Walicki's appraisal of Eliseev, see Andrzej Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism* (Stanford University Press, 1979), p. 427.

⁷⁴ Grigorii Zakharovich Eliseev, '862–1862, ili tysiacheletie Rossii', in *Svitok: sobranie literaturnykh, zhurnal'nykh i drugikh zametok*, ed. by A. A. Zhuk and A. A. Demchenko (Moscow: Nauka, 1981), pp. 232–54 (p. 239).

that he made evident with his professional career choices did generate problems for him and his colleagues. The period of openness that had been inaugurated with Alexander II's accession to the throne had begun to recede as the Great Reforms started to be implemented in earnest. The reactionary attitude that manifested itself in the second half of the 1860s among government circles saw a growing opposition from the public, a tendency that started to erupt when in 1866 Dmitrii Vladimirovich Karakozov made the first attempt to assassinate the emperor.

The news of the failed regicide generated widespread havoc and confusion in Petersburg and throughout the empire. More importantly though, the attempt had the effect of hardening the increasingly conservative line the government was taking towards civil society. As part of the government's investigations and retaliations, it was decided that the progressive journal *Sovremennik* would be closed, for fomenting seditious political views, and many of their editors were imprisoned for being associated with the group of terrorists that carried out the attack. In Eliseev's words, 'I had no existing contact with the Karakozov affair. However, the leading investigator and head of this legal process, Count Murav'ev, wanted to purge Russia of any person that could be considered pernicious and even remotely connected with this event'.⁷⁵ Eliseev's imprisonment lasted only a few days, but the more relevant consequence of this event was the closing of *Sovremennik* which left him jobless and in a dire position. As Kleĭnbort writes about this episode, 'Eliseev's position after leaving the prison was not easy. *Sovremennik* was closed, he did not have another job at the time and nor did he have any savings to rely upon'.⁷⁶ Fortunately, Nikolaĭ Alekseevich Nekrasov, a poet and former colleague in *Sovremennik*, threw him a financial lifeline and together they got to work immediately. In 1868, these efforts finally resulted in the acquisition of an existing journal, *Otechestvennye zapiski* (Fatherland Notes), that went from the ownership of A. A. Kraevskii to Nekrasov, who made Eliseev and Saltykov-Shchedrin its main editors.⁷⁷

This new phase in Eliseev's life brought him more stability than had been the case before. Firstly, *Otechestvennye zapiski* represented a continuation of his old position, as 'nearly all the old writers for *Contemporary* [*Sovremennik*] took up their pens for *Notes*

⁷⁵ Quoted in Kleĭnbort, *G. Z. Eliseev*, p. 28.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁷⁷ See Ruud, *Fighting Words*, p. 177. For Eliseev's relationship with Nekrasov and Saltykov-Shchedrin, see Vladislav E. Evgen'ev-Maksimov, *N. A. Nekrasov i ego sovremenniki: ocherki* (Moscow: Federatsiia, 1930); and Mikhail E. Saltykov-Shchedrin, *M. E. Saltykov-Shchedrin: sobranie sochineniĭ. Tom XX*, ed. by V. Ia. Kirpotin, A. S. Bushmin, and Sergeĭ A. Makashin (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1977).

[*Zapiski*], even the few arrested by Murav'ev and then cleared by the special court investigating the assassination attempt'.⁷⁸ Secondly, the popularity enjoyed by *Sovremennik* was transferred to *Otechestvennye zapiski* and even enhanced, providing Grigoriĭ Zakharovich with the much elusive financial security given to the men and women devoted to the press. It was in this position, as editor of the 'Domestic Chronicle' section that Eliseev developed his work more thoroughly and where he finally, in 1881, retired from his duties. This period was also kind to Eliseev on a personal level as it was in this transitional phase that he met his wife Ekaterina Pavlovna Gofshtetter (1830–1891), who would stay with him until his death. N. M. Iadrintsev described the positive effect this new relationship had on Eliseev in an article written in *Vostochnoe obozrenie* saying that in the 1860s Eliseev 'seemed extremely agitated. I sometimes thought that with his nervousness, he would not live long'. However, 'several years later I found him to be different; and if I didn't know what was going with Eliseev, I wouldn't have recognised him. He was a good-natured, corpulent and calmed man with good humour and a wonderfully encouraging smile'.⁷⁹ The change Iadrintsev witnessed was down to Eliseev's meeting Gofshtetter, a trained prosecutor and divorced woman who, in Iadrintsev's opinion, infused new life into a strained Grigoriĭ Zakharovich.

During this period, but also at his previous positions in *Sovremennik* and *Iskra*, one of Eliseev's most important endeavours was to become the voice of the provinces in the capital. He published extensively on provincial and peasant issues, fighting what he saw as a metropolitan condescension that created an illusionary image of the provincial backwaters of the empire. From the beginning of his publicist career he strove to change the tone and content of discussions about them. In an article published in *Iskra* in 1859, he referred to this by saying that:

Now, in our newspapers, we no longer find enthusiastic descriptions of official dinners in honour of provincial governors; feuilletons are no longer limited to praising the founders of a provincial festival or to a report about stage performances – including careful remarks about an actor's bland and unsatisfactory performance of his role, and such and such actress, that although very much loved by the public, rarely appears on the stage – no.

⁷⁸ Ruud, *Fighting Words*, p. 177.

⁷⁹ Nikolaĭ Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, 'Znachenie zhenshchiny v zhizni pisatel'ia', *VO*, 28 April 1896, pp. 2–3 (p. 2).

We are above all these little things now and have already stepped away from them.⁸⁰

In Eliseev's view, the frivolity with which provincial topics were discussed in the capitals needed to make way for the important and real issues that affected them, reflecting the new times that were unfolding at the end of 1850s.

Eliseev continued his essay suggesting the issues that should be discussed instead:

Now we need to recount all the abuses committed in the cities of Krutogorsk, Chernorechka, Sviatoslav, in city A, in cities B, C, D, D, E, F, Z, I, K, L, etc... Denounce the abuses committed in the provinces of -skoï, -vskoï, -ovskoï, -kovskoï, -skovskoï and -oskovskoï. Although these provinces cannot be named and these cities do not exist, the facts that have happened in them are real, and we happily welcome their literary exposure.⁸¹

Eliseev, by putting forward this idea, strove to change the role that journalism had in the portrayal of the provinces in the capitals. He wished to create a space within the metropolis in which the rest of the empire could speak. In a way, he understood that the nascent civil society that was developing in the centre was limited to the boundaries of capital cities, that the light arising over Russia – that persuaded Eliseev to move to St. Petersburg – was a privilege of the metropolis. Therefore, he wished to extend the benefits of publicity – or *glasnost'* – to the periphery by becoming the outlet of their grievances, the place where imperial policy could be challenged and exposed.

Eliseev understood this purpose entailed getting involved in different activities which can be glimpsed from his correspondence with contemporaries. For example, a letter sent in 1885 by Iadrintsev made him aware of the challenges of Siberia's press by remarking that 'the enemy appeared in Tomsk in the form of a press organ led by Korsh and Polianskiï named *Sibirskii vestnik*' as well as relating the penalties that had befallen *Sibirskaiia gazeta*.⁸² Additionally, from Eliseev's correspondence with Pëtr L. Lavrov – a Russian publicist who, alongside Herzen, was the most notorious representative of the Russian illegal press abroad – we learn of his involvement in the smuggling of the autobiography of Ivan A. Khudiakov, Eliseev's friend and a fellow Siberian revolutionary

⁸⁰ Quoted in Lemke, *Ocherki*, p. 57.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 58. In the excerpt Eliseev is making reference to the ban on naming cities and provinces by their real name, or their initials, as censorship would not allow it.

⁸² Nikolaï Mikhaïlovich Iadrintsev, 'N. M. Iadrintsev - G. Z. Eliseev', in *Literaturnoe nasledstvo Sibiri: tom V* (Novosibirsk: Zapadno-sibirskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1980), pp. 290–91 (p. 290).

of the 1860s, who Eliseev met, along with his entire family, in Tobol'sk during the 1850s.⁸³

However, his main activity was to speak about and for the provinces in the capital, an intention that originated with the way in which metropolitan press had been portraying provincial life. In Eliseev's view, the accounts being given of the provinces were not only frivolous, as he suggested above, but harmful and even part of the problems that pervaded provincial administration. In an article Eliseev wrote in December 1858 in *Sovremennik*, he argues against the description that a fellow Siberian made of the region a few months earlier. A certain G. V. Kolmogorov, writing in *Otechestvennye zapiski* – before Nekrasov's administration – talked about the characteristics of land tenure in the region. As part of the description of Siberia in general, Eliseev describes Kolmogorov's work saying that:

He became one of the most fervent panegyrists of Siberia and all his writings were an incessant and solemn hymn about Siberia. In Siberia, Kolmogorov says, people live better, dress better, drive better, and conduct their business better, etc... Siberians do all this even better than in Russia proper, and this is Kolmogorov's permanent theme.⁸⁴

Eliseev explains in his article that initially he was moved by what he was reading in Kolmogorov's article:

I found it necessary to talk about my delight when I read Mr. Kolmogorov's article, especially since it talked about places I am familiar with. And what an article! What a splendid account of Siberia's vegetation, of the beneficial ways of harvesting its forests, of the causes of the catastrophes that sometimes devastate nature and human settlements, etc... And all this done in brilliant style, what an artisan, handling his brush as if it was a picture!⁸⁵

In this excited – but in hindsight, ironic – state, Eliseev said that he went over to share his enthusiasm about Kolmogorov's article with a friend of his who worked in the forest management of the unspecified Siberian place being talked about in the article:

⁸³ Grigorii Zakharovich Eliseev and Pëtr L. Lavrov, 'Iz neizdannoï perepiski P. L. Lavrova i G. Z. Eliseev', in *Literaturnoe nasledstvo № 19–21* (Moscow: Zhurnal'no-gazetnoe ob'edinenie, 1935), pp. 257–71 (pp. 269–71).

⁸⁴ Eliseev, 'O Sibiri', p. 162.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

I went to visit an official, a good acquaintance of mine, a factory forester, who then lived in the city, with whom (that is, with the forester) I wanted to share the pleasure that I enjoyed from the article of Mr. Kolmogorov. The forester was quite rare in the city where I lived as [...] I haven't yet seen a person to whom the imposed duty would be so naturally in harmony with his inner abilities, and with such sincere and boundless attachment to his work, as this forester. [...]. He loved the forest almost more than his family, although he was an exemplary family man. He knew every bush, and every tree, from the age-old tree, to the twig barely visible from the ground. [...] I went to his forest ranger office and asked him: "Have you read Mr. Kolmogorov's article about Siberian forests? Tell me, have you read it yet?" "How could I not? – he replied – As soon as I got it from the post office, I read it. However, everything in it is nonsense." I was so taken aback. [...] "Why? – I replied, already stammering a little – look what style, what brush stroke, and so on." "It is just – he answered – that of use or truth, there is not hair in it. After all, I laughed reading what the author said in this article. For example, here he talks about the extraordinary vegetation in Siberia. He says that growing a forest, which sometimes takes centuries to grow but is being cut down on huge quantities, grows again in fifteen years to the same level of growth as it was before. Heavenly creator! Where did the author see this? [...] Yes, not only in Siberia, or in any virgin forests, on the whole globe there is nothing similar.⁸⁶

Eliseev, respecting the word of this knowledgeable forester, goes on to ask himself why Kolmogorov would write such lies in the article? And indeed, the answer he found had to do with the problems that affected provincial administration, with the local mismanagement that was justified and perpetuated through journalistic activities in the capitals. He writes that:

I myself knew one provincial head who went into a frenzy every time a negative newspaper or a journal article was written in Petersburg about his provincial backwater, and sincerely regretted that he had no home authors to rebuke. That is, if you want, he had a lot of them, but he could not use them for his own purposes.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 170–71.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 166.

Eliseev then proceeds to say that in order to protect himself and his bad bureaucratic reputation in the capital, ‘he calls in one of his deputies and says to him: “now there is great freedom for the grub-street journalist [*bumagomaratel*’]. They write about everything, knowing nothing. They began to write about our region, and they do not understand anything about administrations or this region, but still they talk a lot’.⁸⁸ Then this provincial chief promises that ‘those who would write answers to such deceitful articles will enjoy my special consideration and I will give them rewards’.⁸⁹

Eliseev described this dynamic as part of the relationship existing between the realities of the provinces and its depiction in the capitals. The latter was not necessarily a trustworthy picture of what was going on, but rather, part and parcel of the political quarrels that were happening in the higher administrative echelons of the empire. In this sense, the provincial presence in the metropolitan press was only a battleground for bureaucratic infighting, and even when abuses or mismanagement were reported, these were taken as personal attacks against an imperial administrator, as Eliseev’s article conveyed. The overt dependence on the metropolis for staffing and deciding policy in the provinces, that Eliseev had experienced during his time in Siberia’s colonial administration, was what he challenged from his commitment to the provinces in his literary activities in the capital. He understood from his endeavours that it was necessary to dismantle the distorted views that the metropolitan press had about the provinces. Instead, it was necessary to shift the focus towards providing the imperial peripheries with a space in which their concerns and pleas could be put forward, offering an alternative to the bureaucratic channels available to do so. Just as the developing Siberian press of the 1880s played the role of the societal institution Siberians lacked and longed for, Eliseev thought of his metropolitan tribune as the societal channel through which provincial life could be discussed on its own merits.

One of the ways in which Eliseev thought that it was possible to become this channel through which the provinces could speak was by proposing policy. As we have discussed above, working as a journalist was a political statement, especially in a context devoid of party organisations. But journalism’s political dimension was not restricted to a declaration of the kind of political tendency to which a writer subscribed by being part of this or that newspaper. It also meant thinking about policies to implement as there were limited spaces for doing this during the period. In this sense, Eliseev was a relevant figure

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

for Russian journalism during the second half of the 19th century, as he broadened the spectrum of approaches for understanding and discussing contingent issues in Russian journalism. Sergeĭ Nikolaevich Iuzhakov (1849–1910), a Russian sociologist who worked almost a generation after Grigorii Zakharovich's involvement in journalism, recognised in his sociological essays⁹⁰ that Eliseev and N. V. Shelgunov were among the first who attempted to develop the discipline within their journalistic activities. As such, Eliseev understood that the tribune he enjoyed as a publicist came with the responsibility to formulate specific and detailed suggestions for the improvement of administrative activities, addressing issues that ranged from statistical data collection, to the replacement of the current carriages for prisoner transportation to Siberia. The historical, literary and political commentary framework in which it was usual to move as a journalist was expanded in Eliseev's journalistic activities.⁹¹

He held the belief that it was possible that sound and well-structured policy suggestions might fall into the right hands whilst he was in the centre of the empire. In an article in which Eliseev proposed ways of transporting prisoners to Siberia, he confirmed this idea when stating that:

We were pleased to hear that our article '*Ugolovnye prestupniki*' was met with sympathy by some educated people from the St. Petersburg bureaucratic world. However, we are far from attributing this sympathy to the merits of our article as it was not even a faint image of the conditions endured by deportees on their way to Siberian exile. I think that the horrible situation spoke for itself. Could any truly educated person be able to calmly hear that thousands of people suffer mentally and physically, only because the old way of moving them is being stubbornly kept, while the new proposed way of transporting them – which could completely destroy the evil that they endure – was not worth the particular cost?⁹²

Eliseev's satisfaction rested in the fact that it was possible to effect changes by the written word. His understanding of the imperial geography of power, in which being

⁹⁰ See Sergeĭ Nikolaevich Iuzhakov, *Sotsiologicheskie etiuudy* (St. Petersburg: M. M. Stasiulevicha, 1891), I–II.

⁹¹ See for example his articles Grigorii Zakharovich Eliseev, 'O prepovozhdenii ssyl'nykh po Sibiri na konnykh podvodakh', *Sovremennik* (St. Petersburg, March 1861), pp. 193–216; Grigorii Zakharovich Eliseev, 'O dvizhenii narodonaseleniia v Rossii', *Sovremennik* (St. Petersburg, January 1861), pp. 199–229; Grigorii Zakharovich Eliseev, 'Krest'ianskiĭ vopros', *Otechestvennye zapiski* (St. Petersburg, March 1868), pp. 151–86; Grigorii Zakharovich Eliseev, 'Krest'ianskaia reforma', *Otechestvennye zapiski* (St. Petersburg, January 1874), pp. 141–86; Eliseev, 'Khronika'.

⁹² Eliseev, 'O prepovozhdenii', p. 297.

closer to the centre of political authority mattered more than being in the provincial civil service, meant that he – while being unable to effect change in the provinces themselves, as he ascertained while being in the civil service – could at least create debate around pressing provincial issues.

This outlook towards his position was also explored in a ‘Domestic Chronicle’ published in *Otechestvennye zapiski*, in June 1875. In it, Eliseev provided an example of this ambition to be the platform in which local concerns could be put forward, especially in places where there were no societal institutions to address these matters. Talking about Siberian administration, which he knew well, he puts forward a series of measures that would help in improving the performance of imperial administration in the region. To avoid having the problems associated with a bureaucracy that was more preoccupied with their image in the metropolis, as he argued in Kolmogorov’s case, he proposed that:

First, give all those service privileges that are now given to the European Russians serving in Siberia to Siberian-born officials who have received higher education, and eliminate these privileges for outsiders; second, let the government make a call to all Siberians who have received higher education, and are currently serving in Russia, to enter Siberian administration to serve in positions appropriate to their current posts, enjoying all the privileges accorded to them, and those that are currently given to the non-natives of Siberia and for all the time they served outside Siberia; and finally, let the government establish scholarships for Siberians at the universities of the capital, and we can assure them that in ten years, Siberia will receive as many educated elements as it has not acquired for over fifty years.⁹³

Eliseev’s conclusions about the way in which the provinces could improve their situation aimed to spread to the provinces the political agency he was exercising in the capital through his literary activities. By doing so, many of the problems that were recognised as endemic of Siberia’s administration could be explained and addressed: the proverbial lack of trained people, which officials referred to in previous chapters as one of the main problems affecting the region, was being refuted and, at the same time, solved; the roots of the corruption and arbitrariness that characterised Siberian bureaucracy was being identified by the privileges and incentives of foreign officials, a situation that could

⁹³ *Sochineniia G. Z. Eliseeva*, I, p. 440.

be improved by locals' participation in the decision-making instances within their regions. In a way, Eliseev wished that the life in exile he endured could serve the purpose of helping others in avoiding the experience of having to leave their homeland to pursue a career that suited their intention to serve the society in which they lived.

Conclusion

In 1881 Eliseev suffered a brain haemorrhage that forced him to stop his literary activities. As a consequence of his illness, he and his wife, Ekaterina Pavlovna, went to Germany in order to take care of his health, allowing him little possibility for further journalistic engagement. During this period he published few articles and was more inclined to settle his accounts and plan for when he was gone. Grigoriï Zakharovich's health deteriorated rapidly and in January 1891, at the age of 69, when he had recently returned to St. Petersburg, a stroke ended his life. Eliseev's decisions about his legacy and patrimony were symbolic of the life he led. The financial security he achieved during his time in *Otechestvennye zapiski* was partly donated to the creation of a literary fund to support writers in financial need, a situation he had experienced more than once throughout his career. In the same way, he left the rest of his patrimony, 20,000 rubles, to the Tver' *zemstvo* to fund the establishment of peasant loans for the acquisition of land.

By following Eliseev's trajectory and analysing his life this chapter has shown how the topics explored throughout this thesis could be embodied in a single individual who roamed the empire during this period. His early childhood in Siberia, and his unfortunately eventful, but ultimately happy family life, left with him the love for his homeland and the memories attached to it. His school years in the educational institutions of the Church led to his first experience of having to leave Siberia to find better prospects, to access the opportunities that were not available in Siberia for Siberians. The university years Grigoriï Zakharovich spent in Moscow familiarised him with the greater movements that were stirring through the empire, as well as the differences existing between a provincial existence and metropolitan life. These years saw Eliseev realise how these inequalities could be articulated in a political language that promoted changes, which he increasingly saw as a common goal among his peers. In the same manner, his academic career in Kazan' allowed him to consolidate his intellectual abilities, turning into a period that enabled a deeper understanding of the social processes that were

affecting the empire. This realisation prompted him to leave the spiritual and academic realm to engage directly with people's concerns. However, his return to Siberia, and his decision to join the civil service, made him understand that there were inequalities that went beyond his willingness to serve society, as it became evident, in Mironov's words, that 'government officials were always orientated toward the interests of the state rather than those of society'.⁹⁴ During this time, Eliseev came to understand that these issues had to do with the colonised nature of his homeland, something that could only be overcome with the tools that were available in the centre of the empire. After his second and definitive migration from Siberia, Eliseev pursued a line of social engagement within the frame of activities of the Russian *intelligentsia*, developing a duty towards provincial empowerment through literary exposure that ultimately allowed him to fulfil the social role that he had sought to accomplish from his time in Siberia's colonial administration.

Eliseev's life was crossed by many identities that were part of an imperial existence. Imperial formations are characterised more by their diversity than their homogeneity, and individuals' lives attest to this. Eliseev's trajectory can be described as part of such heterogeneity: he was an ethnic Russian, who was born and raised in Asiatic Russia, while also being part of the spiritual *soslovie*, all characteristics that place him within and outside imperial privileged positions. Being a *popovich* was a condition that allowed him access to a support network, as precarious as it might have been, that other countrymen did not have. It was within this network that he was raised and recognised as a talented individual. However, he chose to leave aside this aspect of his life to focus on his less well-defined position as an *intelligent*, which turned into a prominent aspect of his social and individual recognition. And despite these ever-crossing trajectories recasting his sense of self, it is interesting to notice that the provincial within the inter-imperial – the Siberian – remained as one of his main concerns and defined his activities. Eliseev asserted in 1873 that:

The scope of my former literary duties [in the university of Kazan'] in essence was not at all in contradiction with my current literary activity [as a progressive journalist]. I did not go through a radical moral change to go from the first to the last. With the passing of the years, my theoretical religious outlook did somewhat change. However, my moral outlook remained the same. The moral truths that I preached in sermons, that I had

⁹⁴ Boris Nikolaevich Mironov and Ben Eklof, *A Social History of Imperial Russia, 1700–1917. Vol. 2* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 2000), p. 153.

in my mind, or that were expounded in my lectures to students, or even in the historical work I did, are the same truths that I have now and profess in my journalistic duties.⁹⁵

The shaping of these moral truths, and the continuity between his religious upbringing and his civil life, were the result of the experience of a colonised Siberia, which forced him to look to the centre of imperial activities for fulfilling what he considered was his social duty as a Siberian intellectual.

⁹⁵ Quoted in Kleĭnbort, *G. Z. Eliseev*, p. 37.

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, I have shown how Siberians experienced the inclusionary and exclusionary measures that characterise colonial settings. From wider analyses of imperial administrative structures, and the mechanisms deployed for governing different territories and peoples, to detailed and embodied accounts of how empire was experienced by Siberians on the ground, this thesis establishes Siberia's colonial condition within the Russian state, highlighting the importance that coloniality has for understanding the region's historical relationship with European Russia.

The different measures that the empire initiated during the second half of the 19th century pointed towards a drive from the centre of imperial activity for the improvement of the Russian polity. Administrative reforms, such as the *zemstva* institutions, the loosening of censorship restrictions, the inclusion of western Siberia within the administrative scope of the core regions, and the Great Reforms in general are examples of the controlled modernisation that the empire envisaged as the solution that would provide long sought-after stability on an increasingly competitive international stage. However, these changes also brought with them unforeseen consequences that the state needed to contain, as the activities of the *intelligentsia* analysed in Chapter 2 made evident. It was in limiting the spread of the harmful outcomes produced by the reforms that many aspects of the Russian empire's colonial hierarchy were laid bare, providing a good vantage point from where to appreciate the place that Siberia occupied within the different forms of the Russian state. Through an analysis of the middle-men and the different constraints their Siberian condition imposed upon them, this thesis offers a way of settling the disputed definitions of Siberia, which have swerved between considering it as a colonial outpost and seeing it as a purely Russian heartland.

For understanding how this process unfolded for Siberians it became necessary to firstly understand how reforms affected the core regions of the empire. Chapter 2 discussed the importance of the process of modernisation that started in the late 1850s for the European section of the empire, analysing the consequences that the empire hoped to develop by liberating serfs and unleashing the series of reforms that resulted from this. The desire to further expand bureaucratic penetration into society with the end goal of strengthening autocratic power while harnessing society's resources in a more rational way, was developed from the centre during the reign of Alexander II. However, this

process also brought with it an array of unexpected consequences, as by the creation of *zemstva* the imperial power had established a space in which a growing number of intellectuals developed political views that made them refuse to transform these institutions into an extension of the bureaucratic structure. They conceived these organs of self-government as schools of public administration, from where decision-making powers could eventually be transferred to society. However, in Siberia these organs of self-government were not implemented, and their absence can be interpreted as a strategy intended to maintain the development of social initiative within the limits of the manageable. Simultaneously, the absence of a landowning nobility in the region made the avoiding of *zemstva*'s expansion to Siberia instrumental in protecting the metropolitan bureaucratic elite from having a local social counterweight that could challenge their monopoly of power.

Metropolitan initiative in Siberia was not only upheld by keeping *zemstva* west of the Urals, as there were also localised administrative mechanisms that worked to protect European Russian officials in the bureaucratic apparatus from being undermined by local initiative. As discussed in the case study analysis of Tomsk's imperial administration in chapter 3, the composition of the colonial structure in Siberia could be differentiated between a metropolitan elite, who had higher qualifications and headed most of the decision-making positions in the administration, constituting themselves into an administrative elite; and a larger body of middle and lower-rank officials of Siberian origin that manned most of the positions that were in direct contact with the Siberian population. Rural scribes (*pisaria*) and most of the day-to-day officials found in the urban centres were part of this second body of bureaucrats. By putting in place a series of methods to blame local officials for the permanent underperformance of local administration, and by stymying the development of locals' bureaucratic careers by keeping the higher positions available only for metropolitan bureaucrats the imperial bureaucratic elite protected itself from locals' participation in higher administrative spheres.

It was only in the development of Siberia's press, as explored in chapter 4, that local intellectuals found a way to put forward their own understanding of the colonial relationship they endured, establishing a dialogue with the centre and challenging imperial policy in Siberia. With the development – in the late 1870s – of a relatively free body of press in the region, Siberians had the opportunity to create a public opinion that discussed the changes that were being put in place both in Siberia and in the wider

imperial context. This allowed them to put pressure on imperial bureaucracy, not by having a say in the policy decisions being made within administration, but by showing their acute understanding of the extractive nature of their relationship to the imperial core. Regardless of its delayed development, this press was the local *intelligenty*'s only means of criticising Siberia's administrative structure and the assimilationist policies promoted by metropolitan advocates.

Finally, by looking at the life and trajectory of the Siberian-born intellectual Eliseev, I examined the impact that all these aspects of Siberia's coloniality had over an individual. The analysis of Grigoriĭ Zakharovich's career as a *popovich*, an academic, an imperial official in Siberia and as a publicist in the empire's capital, helped to elucidate the geographical and *soslovie* dimensions that underpinned Siberian subordination. By engaging with the motivations behind his career decisions and the various identities that he possessed, it was possible to understand the centrality that his Siberian origin had for discovering his commitment to society. The embodied experience that the analysis of Eliseev's life provided reveals the ascendancy that geographical hierarchies had over *soslovie* identities, a feature of Russian imperial rule that has furthered the ambiguous nature of Siberia's relationship to the Russian state.

By uncovering these aspects of Siberia's coloniality, this thesis contributes to the field of Siberian studies by creating a dialogue between *kraevedenie* and historiography about the Russian empire developed within the framework of the imperial turn. *Kraevedenie* and its practitioners have offered valuable contributions to the general understanding of the Russian provinces, being 'associated with the historical and ecological preservation movements, various forms of local boosterism, and, to a real extent, anti-centrist sentiment'.¹ Bridging *kraevedenie*'s efforts to assert the importance that localised conceptions of Russia's history have for its inhabitants, with the theoretical frameworks developed in New Imperial History, allows us to expand the reach of locally-based research and the strengthening of provincial demands *vis-à-vis* the central state. At the same time, the overt focus on cultural and soft aspects of Siberia's imperial experience, as developed in the last two decades within scholarly work produced under the imperial turn in historiography, is expanded in this thesis by an analysis that, while being informed by these theoretical discussions, explores bureaucratic structures and locally-produced administrative mechanisms, topics that hitherto had stayed on the

¹ Emily D. Johnson, *How St. Petersburg Learned to Study Itself: The Russian Idea of Kraevedenie* (Penn State University Press, 2006), p. 6.

margins of scholars' research agendas. This thesis opens avenues for dialogue between these historiographies, with the aim of creating reciprocity between the disciplines. As Johnson has argued, *kraevedenie* 'as a discipline that deals with both identity and geographic space,'² can offer valuable perspectives to our understanding of Russian provincial history, particularly by putting localised identities at the centre of the analysis, sidelining the weight traditionally enjoyed by the central state in historical accounts.

At the same time, the focus on the social groups of middle-men has allowed me to contribute to the understanding of civil society and the *intelligentsiia* in the Russian empire. Historiography dealing with these subjects has tended to isolate both concepts and study them separately, distinguishing social and economic developments, which are usually studied through civil society, from political ones, generally analysed via the activities of the *intelligentsiia*. On the one hand, civil society has been widely understood to be the space between state, private lives and the economy, where individuals set out to protect their interests by creating different networks and associations.³ As such, it has been understood as a space occupied by a nascent bourgeois society, by professionals that were not necessarily inclined to challenge the political *status quo* in the empire. Instead, study of them has focused on the likeliness of the emergence of democratic institutions in autocratic Russia. The *intelligentsiia*, on the other hand, has been studied as the group of educated individuals that took part in the dynamic political landscape of the empire, who defined themselves through their commitment to bridge social fractures in Russian society.⁴ For this reason, they have been explored in order to trace the political trajectories that led to the fall of the Russian empire and the rise of the Soviet polity.

This thesis has strived to broaden the analysis of both civil society and the *intelligentsiia*, to integrate our understanding of both groups as has been proposed by Tatsumi.⁵ Understanding the *intelligentsiia* and civil society in an integrated way shows us different aspects of these middle-men's activities. Moving away from an idealised Russian *obshchestvennost'* and a romanticised *intelligentsiia*, this thesis explores the extent to which colonial frameworks affected the positions they strived to occupy in

² Johnson, *How St. Petersburg Learned to Study Itself*, p. 7.

³ Bradley, *Voluntary Associations in Tsarist Russia*, p. 7.

⁴ See Gary M. Hamburg, 'Russian Intelligentsias', in *A History of Russian Thought*, ed. by William Leatherbarrow and Derek Offord (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 44–69.

⁵ See Yukiko Tatsumi, 'Russian Critics and *Obshchestvennost'*, 1840–1890: The Case of Vladimir Stasov', in *Obshchestvennost' and Civic Agency in Late Imperial and Soviet Russia: Interface between State and Society*, ed. by Yasuhiro Matsui (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 16–33.

imperial Russia.⁶ Looking at these middle-men from a wider perspective contributes to our understanding of their importance, and the roles played by them in the creation of colonial differences that underpinned Siberia's relationship to the imperial centre.

Moreover, incorporating coloniality as a tool for understanding Siberia's position in the Russian state can serve the purpose of consolidating Russian history's inclusion within wider debates about colonialism and the power exerted by Europeans over colonised territories. By doing so, furthermore, this thesis has also contributed to reconfiguring the 'uniqueness' (*samobytnost'*)⁷ of Russian history, that is, the nationalistically-rooted idea that Russia has followed a different historical path that precludes its comparison with European imperial history. As Ben Eklof has argued, this effort is a 'vital political task today'⁸ as it helps to avoid the dangers of nationalistic tendencies that stress Russia's special condition.⁹ The problem of creating a 'usable past' being discussed in Russian academia, or the need to give new meaning to Russians' histories after the fall of the Soviet project and the social uncertainty that followed, can be therefore reassessed by leaving behind narratives of Russia's special path. Integrating Russian historical processes within the continuum of European and imperial histories, while avoiding the pitfalls of an overt homogenisation, can bring what Boris Mironov has termed a Clio-therapy to Russians' understanding of their history.¹⁰

However, this does not amount to an attempt to equate Russia's history with that of its European neighbours. There are differences that need to be accounted for and studied on their own merits as they push the limits of concepts that can be useful in both realms. In this sense, the overt reliance that colonial studies has had on constructing colonial difference from a racial perspective can be problematised by understanding that Russian colonial rule over Siberia did not rely on racially-constructed categories to underpin colonial differences. As Stoler has argued, it has been almost unavoidable to

⁶ I follow the steps of Uyama, 'Repression of Kazakh Intellectuals'; Adeeb Khalid, 'Representations of Russia in Central Asian Jadid', in *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917*, ed. by Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), pp. 188–202.

⁷ See 'On the Problem of Russia's "Separate Path" in Later Imperial Historiography', in *Historiography of Imperial Russia: The Profession and Writing of History in a Multinational State*, ed. by Thomas Sanders and Terence Emmons (Armonk, N.Y.: Routledge, 1997), pp. 163–87; Cherepanova, 'Discourse on a Russian "Sonderweg"'.

⁸ Ben Eklof, "'By a Different Yardstick:'" Boris Mironov's "A Social History of Imperial Russia, 1700–1917", and Its Reception in Russia', *Ab Imperio*, 2008.3 (2008), 289–318 (p. 314).

⁹ As exemplified by Alexander Dugin, *Eurasian Mission: An Introduction to Neo-Eurasianism* (United Kingdom: Arktos, 2014).

¹⁰ Quoted in David L. Ransel, 'A Single Research Community: Not Yet', *Slavic Review*, 60.3 (2001), 550–57 (p. 557).

understand race as a ‘built-in and natural product of that encounter’.¹¹ As such, colonial situations in which race is less evident have often been defined in other terms, an aspect that has contributed to the ambiguity with which Siberia has been endowed. However, as this thesis has argued, the institutional and bureaucratic strategies deployed in Siberia were instrumental in highlighting the importance of imperial geographies in the construction of colonial hierarchies. The territorial continuity existing between the empire’s core and its outlying colonies did make racial divisions less pervasive and apparent than geographical ones in the process of differentiating ‘internal Russia’ from outlying colonial possessions. However, this should not deter scholars from identifying these arrangements as colonially organised, as extractive methods and differentiated allocation of rights, elements that define colonial situations, remained as metropolitan tools of choice for ruling Siberia. In this sense, Eliseev’s decision to migrate to St. Petersburg becomes a relevant example of the role played by imperial geographies of power for overcoming subordinated positions in relation to the Russian state.

The inclusion of Siberia within colonial debates helps unveil aspects of contemporary Siberian regionalism. The roots of the regionalist movement developed in the second half of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries explain the position occupied by Siberians after the fall of the Soviet Union and their attempts, as expounded by Naumov, to ‘grab as much sovereignty as you can swallow’¹² during the chaotic period that followed the end of the Soviet polity. Efforts to gain autonomy from the centre after the formation of the Russian Federation, in the form of the *Sibirskoe soglashenie* (Siberian Agreement), against the background of centralising measures developed under the government of Vladimir V. Putin can be further illuminated by understanding the historical origins of Siberians’ demands.¹³ The tendency to define Siberian issues under a national framework, reflected in strong federal centralisation, can be shifted by analysing this relationship while being aware of its colonial underpinnings. The same can be said about Siberia’s territorial divisions and the effects they produce over the formulation of region-wide demands and control over regional policy. Placing them against a historical background of imperial policymaking sheds light on the unequal levels

¹¹ Ann Laura Stoler, ‘Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31.1 (1989), 134–61 (p. 137).

¹² Naumov, *The History of Siberia*, p. 129.

¹³ See Vladimir A. Zhdanov, ‘Contemporary Siberian Regionalism’, in *Rediscovering Russia in Asia: Siberia and the Russian Far East*, ed. by Stephen Kotkin and David Wolff (Armonk, N.Y: Routledge, 1995), pp. 120–32.

of socioeconomic development found today among the different *oblasti* in the region. After strong economic centralisation, and unsuccessful attempts to reverse this tendency after the fall of the USSR, the unequal relationship existing between Siberia and Moscow is still a reality for the territories east of the Ural Mountains.¹⁴ Therefore, tracing the trajectory of Siberia's subjection to the metropolitan centre becomes an important task to identify Siberia's coloniality in its relationship to Moscow.

The elements analysed here provide a means to understand the process of difference creation that has underpinned Siberia's relationship with the Russian state. As such, this thesis proposes a path for further historiographic enquiry by developing tools to clarify the region's position within the Russian state. Recognising the usefulness of concepts such as coloniality in describing this relationship, this thesis offers a lens for examining past and present problems affecting Siberians. The identification of the colonial framework that has sustained this affiliation pushes us to consider the methods used to maintain such difference and the perception that Siberians have of their geographical and social position. Indeed, the possibility of Inner Eurasia's autonomous development cannot even begin to be realised without understanding Siberia's place in the longstanding colonial structures and power relations that have characterised its attachment to the Russian state.

¹⁴ Zhdanov, 'Contemporary Siberian Regionalism'.

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