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## **Bureaucracy and Mobility in Late Imperial Russia**

### **Reflections on Elite Careering and Imperial Biographies in a Multiethnic Empire**

#### **Abstract**

The lecture discusses the research project on "Imperial Biographies in a Multiethnic Empire" using the Russian Empire as a case study. One aspect of the project looks at the high level of mobility of imperial actors and the impact this had on changing imperial constitutions. The focus is firmly on those imperial elites whose professional careers often required them to go to the farthest flung corners of the Empire and whose biographies were entwined in numerous ways with the structures of the Empire. Discussion centres on the enduring impact these decision makers and professional experts had in various parts of the Empire. The project also identifies the patterns of mobility which shaped imperial careers and the movement of elites from place to place. These structural aspects are also linked to the images mobile actors had of themselves. The lecture inquires into the origins of actors' perceptions of Empire, their loyalties and identities. Individual biographies are shown to provide insights into the way the protagonists made personal sense of their activities as their personal experiences, imaginings and expectations bring the Empire closer to us.

The theoretical considerations of the research project are subjected to detailed empirical analysis in the second part on the basis of the experience of two elite imperial civil servants. The imperial biographies of Sokrat I. Starynkevich and Anton S. Budilovich function as the interfaces between the protagonists' real lives and their understandings of them, on the one hand, and imperial structures and, in some cases, trans-national patterns of mobility, on the other. In this context the lecture shows how the mental maps of these imperial actors were shaped by the emergence of a dichotomous mentality in which "borderlands" were treated as a collective singular in sharp contrast to the imperial heartland. The lecture proposes the theory that focusing on "imperial biographies" of this kind will allow for a reorientation of research into the multiethnic empires of the long 19<sup>th</sup> century by examining the interplay between structural patterns of mobility, forms of exchange throughout the entire Empire and the way these were perceived by the actors themselves.

#### **Резюме**

В докладе представлен исследовательский проект «Имперские биографии бюрократической элиты в многонациональных империях» на примере Российской империи. Проект принимает во внимание прежде всего высокую мобильность имперских акторов, ставя в центр дискуссии их значимость для процесса изменения имперского устройства. В фокусе исследования находятся те имперские элиты, чьи профессиональные карьеры предполагали службу в разных частях империй и чьи биографии были многосторонне связаны с имперскими структурами. Обсуждению подлежит и вопрос о том, каким образом эти люди, наделенные полномочиями принятия решений и выступавшие в качестве экспертов, оказывали долгосрочное влияние на события в различных областях империи. Проект разрабатывает модели мобильности, оказывавшие воздействие на продвижение по службе и циркуляцию элит. В дальнейшем устанавливается связь между этими структурными характеристиками и самовосприятием мобильных акторов. В докладе ставится вопрос о происхождении у них образа империи, лояльностей и идентичностей. Рассмотрение индивидуальных биографий позволяет проникнуть в особенности субъективных интерпретаций протагонистов истории.

Таким образом, империя раскрывается перед нами через горизонт их опыта, представления и ожидания.

Во второй части доклада эти основополагающие наблюдения получают эмпирическое обоснование на материале биографий двух государственных служащих. Имперские биографии Сократа Старынкевича и Антона Будиловича служат сопряжением индивидуальных жизненных реалий и их интерпретаций, с одной стороны, и имперских структур и порой выходящих за все возможные границы моделей мобильности, с другой. При этом становится очевидно, в какой мере ментальные карты этих имперских акторов определялись развитием дихотомического мышления, в котором «пограничные области» как некое собирательное понятие строго отделялись от «ядра» территорий империи. Согласно тезису, представленному в докладе, внимание к подобному рода «имперским биографиям» способствует переориентации исследований многонациональных империй долгого XIX столетия, при этом рассматриваются взаимовлияния структурных моделей мобильности, отношений обмена, охватывавших всю территорию империи, и интерпретаций происходящего самими акторами.

## **Mobile Elites in a Changing Empire: On the Concept of Imperial Biographies**

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The Russian Empire was an extremely fragmented multi-ethnic and -religious entity. Traditionally it was characterized by the great diversity of its provinces as well as the differences in their local political, economic and social development. The administrative, judicial and educational systems of the various regions were also quite diverse. As a result of its historical process of expansion the Russian Empire lacked an overarching uniform structure. Newly conquered and incorporated territories were in most cases integrated as distinct administrative units in which much of the traditional law system and many members of the ruling elites were co-opted without much change.<sup>1</sup>

<2>

The traditional structure of the Russian monarchy underwent rapid and deep transformation in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The rather strict segregation of the estates came under increasing challenge, the "apartheid" of social, ethnic or religious milieus imploded and the existence of distinct legal and administrative subunits was more and more questioned. The erosion of these strict divides was partly brought about by state-sponsored policies of centralization and modernization. This transformation was to some extent triggered by processes of industrialization, urbanization and the revolution of communication and transportation. The growing strength of national movements and the rise of new professional elites also contributed to this change. All these factors led to the increasing

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Jörg Baberowski, "Auf der Suche nach Eindeutigkeit. Kolonialismus und zivilisatorische Mission im Zarenreich und der Sowjetunion," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 47, 3 (1999): 482-503; Andreas Kappeler, "Nationsbildung und Nationalbewegungen im Russländischen Reich," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 40 (2000): 67-90; Andreas Kappeler, *Rußland als Vielvölkerreich. Entstehung, Geschichte, Zerfall* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 1992), 134-138; Anna Veronika Wendland, "Imperiale, koloniale und postkoloniale Blicke auf die Peripherien des Habsburgerreiches," in *Kolonialgeschichten. Regionale Perspektiven auf ein globales Phänomen*, ed. Claudia Kraft, Alf Lüdtke and Jürgen Martschukat (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 2010), 211-235.

trans-local interconnectedness of the various provinces of the Empire. Spatial and social segregation was transcended by a plurality of historical subjects and trans-local mobility became a common feature during the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup>

<3>

Within this general period of accelerated transformation highly mobile elites were at the centre of change. First of all, the very composition of elites changed as new social strata managed to climb the career ladder even within state institutions to challenge the century-old monopoly of nobles. At the same time, financial and industrial elites became more and more visible, while the educated elite grew considerably in size and increasingly voiced the opinions of a society that had gained much in self-confidence. All these various elite milieus were strongly affected by the increase in mobility during the second half of the century. More than ever their professional biographies gained an Imperial dimension – as their life courses included years of duty, education or occupation in different places of the Empire. It became much more common for the members of the elites to have lived, served or worked in a variety of distant provinces for a longer period of their lives. Their biographies thus became more imperial as the experience of the diversity of the Empires shaped their lives, their careers and self-perceptions more than ever before. As they travelled across the Empire they brought about changes in the various places in which they worked. At the same time their own images of the Empire and their notions of how the monarchy should be reshaped were formed and transformed by their encounter with the Empire's diversity.

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A focus on such imperial biographies and the careers of the members of these mobile elites sheds light on the entangled processes of change. It highlights the mutuality of patterns of mobility, the social, political and cultural changes this mobility brought about and the ways it influenced the mental horizon of those who were travelling the Empire.

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Newer research on imperial biographies in other contexts has already demonstrated how strongly such an approach adds to our understanding of the inner structures, perceptions and changes of multinational Empires in the long 19<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, recent research on the British Empire has witnessed an astonishing shift. Inspired by post-colonial studies, many authors have focused on the biographies of the colonial elites by placing their life stories in the social, political, and cultural Imperial context.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See Jörn Happel and Malte Rolf, "Die Durchlässigkeit der Grenze: Einleitende Überlegungen zu Grenzgängern und ihren Lebenswelten in der späten Habsburger- und Romanow-Monarchie," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 59, 5 (2011): 397-404.

<sup>3</sup> Paradigmatic for an approach to a new imperial history: Catherine Hall, ed., *Cultures of Empire. Colonizers in*

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A research project on Imperial biographies in the late Russian Empire follows this agenda. But it will need to go further than most of the research on the British Empire has gone so far. The research agenda for an ongoing project on "Imperial biographies" will be elaborated in the following.<sup>4</sup> It should advance the debate on the nature of multiethnic Empires and their transformation, particularly in the following four key dimensions.

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First of all, it is essential to highlight how strongly these mobile elites influenced the course of rapid change within the Russian Empire. It should be further investigated how much they represented a dynamic factor within the transforming process in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In general there can be little doubt about the importance of these mobile elites during the modernization of the Empire and the corresponding deep modification of everyday life. Many of them promoted reforms in the fields of administration, industry or culture; some of them fostered the revolution in communications, engineering or science. They induced change simply by virtue of their own mobility as they transferred knowledge and reform agendas from one province to the next. This did not necessarily lead to a reduction in the complexity and heterogeneity of the Empire. On the contrary, in many cases they stimulated processes of local differentiation as their reform projects triggered off specific local forms of indigenization or even resistance. Nonetheless, their activities within local settings accelerated the pace of change almost everywhere.

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*Britain and the Empire in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, eds., *Tensions of Empire. Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). See also the recent studies: David Lambert and Alan Lester, "Introduction. Imperial Spaces, Imperial Subjects," in *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire: Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. David Lambert and Alan Lester (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1-31; Laurence Brown, "Inter-colonial migration and the refashioning of indentured labour: Arthur Gordon in Trinidad, Mauritius and Fiji (1866-1880)," *ibid.*, 204-227; Philip Howell and David Lambert, "Sir John Pope Hennessy and colonial government: humanitarianism and the translation of slavery in the imperial network," *ibid.*, 228-256; Zoë Laidlaw, "Richard Bourke: Irish liberalism tempered by empire," *ibid.*, 113-144. The literature labeled "new biographic studies" also had a powerful influence. See e.g. Volker R. Berghahn and Simone Lässig, eds., *Biography Between Structure and Agency. Central European Lives in International Historiography* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Two conferences were organized by Tim Buchen and the author to develop this research approach. The conferences on "Imperial biographies" took place in May 2012 at the Technical University of Berlin and in July 2012 at the University of Bamberg. For the conference programs see: [http://www.uni-bamberg.de/fileadmin/hist\\_mittelosteuroopa/Imperiale\\_Biographien\\_I\\_-\\_Tagungsprogramm\\_-\\_Mai\\_2012.pdf](http://www.uni-bamberg.de/fileadmin/hist_mittelosteuroopa/Imperiale_Biographien_I_-_Tagungsprogramm_-_Mai_2012.pdf); [http://www.uni-bamberg.de/fileadmin/hist\\_mittelosteuroopa/Imperiale\\_Biographien\\_II\\_-\\_Tagungsprogramm\\_-\\_Juli\\_2012.pdf](http://www.uni-bamberg.de/fileadmin/hist_mittelosteuroopa/Imperiale_Biographien_II_-_Tagungsprogramm_-_Juli_2012.pdf). In addition two edited volumes will be published on the topic in 2013/14. See *Imperiale Biographien in Vielvölkerreichen: Elitekarrieren im Britischen, Deutschen, Habsburger, Osmanischen und Russischen Reich (1850-1918)*, special issue of Tim Buchen and Malte Rolf, eds., *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, also Tim Buchen and Malte Rolf, eds., *Imperiale Biographien: Lebensläufe, Karrieremuster und Selbstbilder der Reichseliten in der Romanow- und der Habsburger Monarchie* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2014).

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Simultaneously, these mobile elites served as representations of the general Imperial context, as they were the most visible connection between the many detached provincial entities and the Imperial center. Due to the relative weakness of other Imperial institutions local images of the Empire relied heavily on the arrival of members of mobile elites – whether they were part of Imperial officialdom or simply entrepreneurs or experts with a trans-local range of activities. The larger context of the Empire was represented to most of the local subjects by these people on the move. Their Empire-wide careers stimulated ideas of the extent to which social and spatial mobility had become possible within the monarchy. Generally speaking, the mobility of imperial elites had a deep impact on the transformation of the country and the state. We need to investigate in which ways their professional careers contributed to the fundamental changes that took place in the Russian Empire at the turn of the century.

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Secondly, we need to identify the specific patterns of professional mobility within the Empire and to spotlight some of the common features of elite careers at the turn of the century. These patterns of imperial careering and elite circulation have been rather neglected by research so far.<sup>5</sup> The Russian Empire facilitated and at the same time hindered or even curtailed mobility. It was characterized by particular patterns of elite circulation and by certain barriers preventing some Imperial subjects from traveling and/or climbing the social ladder. At the same time certain professions had very specific logics and dynamics of horizontal and vertical mobility. We need to take a closer look at these structuring elements of Imperial careers and their transformation during the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We will have to discuss the growing importance of formalized education and the gradual process leading to the professionalization of elites. We will also need to consider how strongly this affected their Empire-wide mobility.

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Thirdly, by focusing on experts in various professional fields we will get a clearer picture of their perceptions of the Empire. We will see how their images of the Empire, their loyalties and their own identity markers were shaped and how these changed over time. We need to discuss how the very experience of mobility influenced their notions of the Empire, the Imperial space and its inner

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<sup>5</sup> For some recent studies stressing this aspect see Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, eds., *Moving Subjects: Gender, Mobility and Intimacy in an Age of Global Empire* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009); Stephen M. Norris and Willard Sunderland, "Introduction. Russia's People of Empire," in *Russia's People of Empire: Life Stories from Eurasia, 1500 to the Present*, ed. Stephen M. Norris and Willard Sunderland (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012); Simon Schaffer, Lissa Roberts, Kapil Raj and James Delbourgo, eds., *The Brokered World: Go-Betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770-1820* (Sagamore Beach: Science History Publications, 2009); Willard Sunderland, "The Emperor's Men at the Empire's Edges," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, 3 (2004): 515-525.

hierarchies; how this molded their perceptions of the complex and heterogenous nature of the multiethnic monarchy.<sup>6</sup>

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It is crucial to stress that the elites were themselves very heterogeneous. They came from various social and cultural backgrounds and they pursued very different political goals. But they all shared an imperial biography in the sense that their private and professional lives had made them serve or work at various places of the Empire. We need to learn more about the way in which this personal experience shaped their images of the dynasties, their political loyalties and their own identity. Thus, we should link the structural patterns of mobility with the emergence of mental maps, images and self-representations of the mobile elites.<sup>7</sup>

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Fourthly and finally, mutual trans-imperial perceptions will play an important role in a new perspective on imperial biographies. Most of the mobile experts were often enough reflecting on reform projects in neighboring Empires. A research agenda on imperial biographies should take a closer look at such transfers of knowledge and images. In general it should focus on the exchanges and multi-layered interdependencies of the Empires of Central and Eastern Europe. The biographies of mobile elites manifest how much the East-European and Eurasian Empires were interrelated and point to the permeability of imperial borders. They help to spotlight the multi-faceted nature of border-crossing transfers and exchanges of concepts or experts.<sup>8</sup>

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A research project on imperial biographies thus aims at stimulating a debate that will shed some new light on the nature and change of the Empires and their entanglement. They serve as a point of venture that allows a new understanding of how historical subjects made sense of the Empires as a

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<sup>6</sup> On the importance of loyalty see Laurence Cole and Daniel L. Unowsky, eds., *The Limits of Loyalty. Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2009); Hannes Grandits, *Herrschaft und Loyalität in der spätosmanischen Gesellschaft. Das Beispiel der multikonfessionellen Herzegowina* (Vienna: Boehlau, 2008); Michael Khodarkovsky, *Bitter Choices: Loyalty and Betrayal in the Russian Conquest of the North Caucasus* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> See also Julia Herzberg and Christoph Schmidt, eds., *Vom Wir zum Ich. Individuum und Autobiographik im Zarenreich* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> On trans-imperial comparisons see e.g. Jörn Leonhard and Ulrike von Hirschhausen, *Empires und Nationalstaaten im 19. Jahrhundert* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009); Jörn Leonhard and Ulrike von Hirschhausen, "Beyond Rise, Decline and Fall. Comparing Multi-Ethnic Empires in the long Nineteenth Century," in *Comparing Empires. Encounters and Transfers in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Jörn Leonhard and Ulrike von Hirschhausen (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011); Dominic Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and its Rivals* (New Haven: Yale Univ Press, 2002); Dominic Lieven, "Empires on Europe's Periphery: Russian and Western Comparison," in *Imperial Rule*, ed. Alexei Miller and Alfred J. Rieber (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004), 133-149.

part of their personal biographical experiences, and how these expressions of subjectivity related to the underlying structural patterns of mobility, career and circulation. Imperial biographies are formed as a conjuncture of individual lives and the state-sponsored systems of the imperial careers. This methodological agenda will open new ways for research on the history and nature of multinational Empires in the long 19<sup>th</sup> century and will contribute to their trans-imperial comparison.

## **Two Case Studies on the Mobile Bureaucratic Elite in the Late Russian Empire: The Imperial Biographies of Sokrat Ivanovich Starynkevich and Anton Semenovich Budilovich**

<14>

Sokrat Ivanovich Starynkevich and Anton Semenovich Budilovich were highly mobile bureaucrats of the Tsarist officialdom during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> Their careers highlight some basic patterns of Imperial mobility and raise the question as to how strongly the specific structure of elite circulation in Russia influenced the officials' perception of Imperial space at the turn of the century. Starynkevich and Budilovich were both bureaucrats whose professional promotion was characterized by a frequent change of professional duties and places of service. Over the years they worked at a number of offices located in very different regions of the Empire. Both of them were second-ranking bureaucrats in the sense that they headed larger administrative units for some time, but never belonged to the core power elite – represented by such institutions as the Ministry of Interior or the Army. Nonetheless, they were fairly typical of a very large number of Imperial officials in the Romanov Empire.

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<sup>9</sup> I encountered with the lives of Starynkevich and Budilovich during my research on Russian rule and the Imperial elites in the Kingdom of Poland after 1863 as they spent a longer period of their careers in Warsaw. See forthcoming: Malte Rolf, *Imperiale Herrschaft im Weichselland: Das Königreich Polen und das Russische Imperium (1864-1915)* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2014). See also my articles: "Imperiale Herrschaft im städtischen Raum: Zarische Beamte und urbane Öffentlichkeit in Warschau (1870-1914)," in *Russlands imperiale Macht. Integrationsstrategien und ihre Reichweite in transnationaler Perspektive*, ed. Bianka Pietrow-Ennker (Cologne: Böhlau, 2012) 123-153; "Russifizierung, Depolonisierung oder innerer Staatsaufbau? Konzepte imperialer Herrschaft im Königreich Polen (1863-1915)," in *Kampf um Wort und Schrift: Russifizierung in Osteuropa im 19.-20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Zaur Gasimov (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 51-88; "Die Durchlässigkeit der Grenze: Einleitende Überlegungen zu Grenzgängern und ihren Lebenswelten in der späten Habsburger- und Romanow-Monarchie," in *Grenzgänger in Vielvölkerreichen: Grenzziehungen und -überschreitungen in Russland und Österreich-Ungarn (1840-1918)*, ed. Malte Rolf and Jörn Happel (Berlin: Metropol-Verlag 2011), 397-404; "A Continuum of Crisis? The Kingdom of Poland in the Shadow of Revolution (1905-1915)," in *Rethinking the Russian Revolution of 1905. Transcultural Perspectives*, ed. Frank Grüner, Raphael Utz and Felicitas Fischer v. Weikersthal (Bloomington: Slavica Publishers, in print); "Approved by the censor: Tsarist censorship and the public sphere in Imperial Russia and the Kingdom of Poland (1860-1914)," in *Underground Publishing and the Public Sphere. Comparative and Transnational Perspectives*, ed. Jan C. Behrends and Thomas Lindenberger (Vienna: LIT, in print); "Metropolen im Ausnahmezustand? Gewaltakteure und Gewalträume in den Städten des ausgehenden Zarenreichs," in *Kollektive Gewalt in der Stadt. Europa 1890-1939*, ed. Friedrich Lenger (Munich: Oldenbourg, in print), 25-49.

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To start with the life of Sokrates Starynkevich. He was born in 1820 in Taganrog, close to the Sea of Azov. In the course of his military service he became acquainted with numerous regions and borderlands of the vast Russian Empire. He also was able to obtain an education as an engineer and was promoted to the rank of a General-Major. After 1863 he was employed by Petersburg's Ministry of Interior and first served as the Governor of Kherson. Later on, in 1875, he was appointed mayor of the city of Warsaw.<sup>10</sup>

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He worked in his office in the city hall until 1892 – in other words, for almost two decades. During his tenure Starynkevich fostered the modernization of Warsaw's infrastructure and focused very much on the improvement of the hygienic standards in the urban centre. In particular, the expansion of the sewage-system was a crucial element of his agenda of state-sponsored urban modernization. But beside this, he also pushed forward the construction of market halls, the establishment of systems of streetcars and street lighting in the centre of the town. Last but not least, he introduced the telephone to Warsaw.

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His own spatial mobility in these years was rather limited. He mainly travelled between Warsaw and Petersburg, frequently lobbying for further investments at the Vistula, and tried to maintain close ties with the influential higher officials in the Ministry of Interior. After his retirement he decided to remain in Warsaw – the city that had become his new home over the years. When he died in 1902 a large public crowd gathered at his funeral - an indication of the astonishing respect this foreign Tsarist bureaucrat had earned among the local Polish and Jewish population. Starynkevich remained one of the few, if not the only representative of St. Petersburg, who evoked positive emotions among the non-Russian city dwellers. Even today a square carries his name and one can find a small statue of Starynkevich in Warsaw.

<18>

Anton Budilovich was a different case altogether. Although he was not as prominent as other more powerful "Russifiers" of the time, he marks the "dark side" of foreign Russian hegemony and Imperial oppression. Budilovich was born in 1846 in the province of Grodno. His family was of Uniate-denomination. He studied at the Theological seminar in Vilnius and subsequently, after converting to Orthodoxy, at the University of Petersburg. By that time he had already turned into a passionate Slavophile and published a couple of Slavophile pamphlets in the 1870s. In 1881 he was appointed as

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<sup>10</sup> On the following see Sokrates Starynkiewicz, "Mój Dziennik," *Rocznik Warszawski XXXI* (2002), 191-222; Sokrates Starynkiewicz, *Dziennik 1887-1897* (Warsaw: Muzeum Historyczne, 2005).

a Professor for Russian and Slavonic languages at the University of Warsaw where he stayed and worked for more than a decade.<sup>11</sup>

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In this period Budilovich pursued his *idée fixe* of merging all Slavic nations on the basis of a common language. He spent many months abroad – mainly on the Balkans – studying languages and identifying a basic grammar of all Slavic tongues.<sup>12</sup> In-between he had enough time to serve in administrative positions at the University of Warsaw. In the 1880s he was appointed as the dean of the faculty of history. In 1892-93 he was transferred to Iur'ev-University and served as its chancellor – shortly after the former University of Dorpat was renamed and the curriculum was strictly Russified. It was here that Budilovich gained a reputation for being a fiery promoter of even further Russification.<sup>13</sup>

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Budilovich's administrative post at several universities made him an Imperial bureaucrat although he would have not called himself a *chinovnik* – an official in a narrow sense. Still, it is important to mention that with the new University status of 1884 deans and chancellors were directly appointed by the Ministry of Education in Petersburg – and those externally imposed on the campus as representatives of the central authorities. Budilovich also differed from many of his more liberal academic colleagues in other respects. For example, he never articulated any even slightly critical views on the monarchy. On the contrary, in his publications Budilovich stressed the importance of a

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<sup>11</sup> See on Budilovich and other professors in Warsaw, *Varshavskii universitet i byvshaia Varshavskaia Glavnaia*, (St. Petersburg, 1908), 20-22; V. V. Esipov, *Materialy k istorii imperatorskogo varshavskogo universiteta. Biograficheskie ocherki*, Vol. 1 (Warsaw, 1913); V. V. Esipov, "Varshavskii universitet" za 50 let (Warsaw, 1914); V. V. Esipov, *Vysshee obrazovanie v tsarstve Pol'skom za sto let (1815-1915). Varshavskii universitet* (Petrograd, 1914); V. V. Esipov, *Materialy k istorii Imperatorskogo Varshavskogo Universiteta. Istoriia vysshogo obrazovaniia v Tsarstve Pol'skom*, Vol. 2 (Warsaw, 1915). For early writings by Budilovich see: A. S. Budilovich, *O prepodavanii otechestvennogo iazyka v nashikh gimnaziakh* (Warsaw, 1882); A. S. Budilovich, *Mefodievskii iubileinii sbornik* (Warsaw, 1885).

<sup>12</sup> A. S. Budilovich, "Otchet o zaniatiiakh s zagranichnoi komandirovke s uchenuiu tsel'iu v iulle i avguste 1883 goda," in *Varshavskie universitetskie izvestiia*, no. 5 (1884), 1-24; A. S. Budilovich, *V kakom vide vozmozhno i zhelatel'no sblizhenie slavian na pochve obshchego iazyka?* (St. Petersburg, 1890); A. S. Budilovich, *Rech' o edinstve russkogo naroda* (St. Petersburg, 1907); F. I. Leonovich, "Ariiskaia osnova obshchestvennogo byta drevnikh slavian," in *Varshavskie universitetskie izvestiia*, no. 1 (1897), 17-59.

<sup>13</sup> See Trude Maurer, *Hochschullehrer im Zarenreich. Ein Beitrag zur russischen Sozial- und Bildungsgeschichte* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1998), 830-832; on Dorpat/Iur'ev see also Erik Amburger, "Die Bedeutung der Universität Dorpat für Osteuropa. Untersucht an der Zusammensetzung des Lehrkörpers und der Studentenschaft in den Jahren 1802-1889," in *Die Universitäten Dorpat/Tartu, Riga und Wilna/Vilnius 1579-1979. Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte und ihrer Wirkung im Grenzbereich zwischen Ost und West*, ed. Gert von Pistohlkors, Toivo U. Raun and Paul Kaegbein (Cologne: Böhlau, 1987), 163-181; Michael H. Haltzel, *Der Abbau der deutschen ständischen Selbstverwaltung in den Ostseeprovinzen Russlands. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der russischen Unifizierungspolitik 1855-1905* (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 1977), 88; Kappeler, *Rußland als Vielvölkerreich*, 212; Trude Maurer, "Russkii Iur'evskii universitet i nemetskii Strasburgskii universitet. Utrachennye forposty," in *Universitet i gorod (nachalo XX veka)*, ed. Aleksandr Dmitriev and Trude Maurer (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2009), 703-60; Sir'e Tamul, "Tartu i ego unversitety (1905-1918 gody)," *ibid.*, 584-702.

strong Imperial and Russian government and praised Uvarov's triad emphasizing the link between autocracy and Orthodoxy.

<21>

Such beliefs could only be helpful for his further career within the institutions of the monarchy. In 1901 the minister of education called him to St. Petersburg where he worked until his death in 1908, dealing mainly with nationality issues, questions of Slavic unity and matters of education in the non-Russian peripheries of the Empire. As an expert on these topics he served as a member of several state-commissions and was also active in a variety of respective associations – for example the Russian-Galician-society.<sup>14</sup>

<22>

This brief summary of the curriculum vitae of the two protagonists shows the differences in their life courses and professional activities. But both lives also show the similarities in Imperial biographies in Russia. In particular, their Imperial careers manifest to what extent the principle of circulation structured various professional fields in the Russian Empire. Their vita sheds some light on the basic patterns of mobility of the Tsarist bureaucracy. Regardless of whether one is dealing with the provincial, municipal or educational administration one encounters circulation and rotation as dominant modes everywhere. This had grave consequences: the bureaucrats who spent some time in local offices were external members of the Imperial elite and were appointed, delegated and later transferred by the central ministries in Petersburg.

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In the local setting they remained foreigners and outsiders who would stay at a certain place only for a rather short period of time. Starynkevich's tenure of almost 20 years was a rare exception to this rule. All the other mayors of Warsaw, for example, held their position for a much shorter period of time. A five-year term for a bureaucrat in one office was already regarded as quite unusual. Governors for example rarely stayed longer in one province than three to four years. The same holds true for other officials like the superintendants of educational districts, the heads of the police apparatus or the chiefs in command of the military districts. The Tsarist administration can be characterized as a system of constant reshuffling of responsibilities and frequent relocation of officials to a variety of positions and places. This meant that Imperial bureaucrats at the end of their careers could look back at a large number of provinces where they had worked and lived for some time.

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<sup>14</sup> See A. S. Budilovich, *Vopros ob okrainakh Rossii, v sviazi s teoriei samoopredeleniia narodnostei i trebovaniiami gosudarstvennogo edinstva* (St. Petersburg, 1906); Budilovich, *Rech'. O edinstve russkogo naroda*.

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This pattern of mobility also brought about a rather long duration of service at the fringes of the Empire. Only at the end of a successful career could a Tsarist official hope to be selected for a seat in the capital.

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At the same time these careers were characterized by a logic of seniority or gerontocracy. In the system of patronage and promotion it was only possible to advance on the career ladder with increased age and years of service. This had severe consequences for the central institutions. For example the average age of ministers in Petersburg in 1914 was 62 years, those of the members of the state council as old as 69.<sup>15</sup> It is well known that the criteria for promotion in the Tsarist administration had very little to do with a person's performance in service. Close ties to the court, noble heritage or personal networks played a major role in the making of a career. Still, some astonishing upward mobility was always a part of the Imperial officialdom even in pre-reform times – Speranskii's career is a good example.

<26>

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Tsarist bureaucracy became much more professionalized. A professional education started to be a determining factor for an official's career; especially if he stemmed from a less prominent noble background. Until the end of autocracy the army provided a central recruiting reservoir for the bureaucracy. But even here more formalized education gained in importance. The career of Starynkevich as a trained engineer may serve as an example in this respect.<sup>16</sup>

<27>

Regarding the patterns of mobility it is crucial to note that even a higher noble background did not protect the noble officials from years of service at the peripheries of the Empire. During an early stage of their career they were expected to gather some experience in the provincial offices. But many older bureaucrats still remained in administrative positions in the peripheries, especially in the higher echelons of the Imperial authority.

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The city of Warsaw may serve as an example here: four of the Tsar's highest representatives in the Kingdom of Poland – the General-Governors - died in Warsaw due to their advanced age. Thus,

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<sup>15</sup> Dominic Lieven, *Russia's Rulers Under the Old Regime* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 147.

<sup>16</sup> See Richard G. Robbins, *The Tsar's Viceroys: Russian Provincial Governors in the Last Years of the Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), chap. 2.

neither senior age nor noble background were enough to protect an official from service in the borderlands of the Empire.<sup>17</sup>

<29>

This very logic of peripheral circulation of bureaucrats had some quite unintended side effects. On the one hand it cemented the foreignness of the officials in the local context. These bureaucrats remained outsiders appointed by the central institutions in Petersburg and sent to the Imperial outposts in the peripheries. They had hardly any closer ties with the local population and showed little interest or ability to overcome their status as outsiders during their short tenure at one place.

<30>

Of course, Starynkevich's sympathies with the people of Warsaw shows that this was not always the case. But he was a rare exception in his attempt to overcome the invisible divide that separated Imperial officials from the Polish or Jewish cosmos of the city. The unique show of support for Starynkevich by local society at his funeral actually bears witness to the exclusiveness of his role as an intermediary. It could in fact easily be read as an appeal to his successors to keep this kind of tradition alive. An appeal that by the way was not to be heard: None of the following mayors in Warsaw were willing to "fraternize" with the locals as much as Starynkevich had been.

<31>

But the principle of rotation also had another important side effect. The circulation of officials established closer links between the various borderland provinces. It was not so much institutionalised forms of trans-local exchange that led to an increasing interrelatedness of the peripheries. Here the arbitrary, but constant transfer of the staff of the Tsarist administration played a much more influential role. Officials who moved from one region to another carried their notions of governance with them to their new place of service. The conflicts and clashes they had witnessed in one province shaped their perception of antagonisms in the succeeding administrative unit.

<32>

To highlight this dynamic one can point to the importance of some officials who acted as "Russifiers" in Baltic provinces in the 1880s and 90s. Many of them had previously served for several years in the conflict-ridden setting of the Kingdom of Poland. In Poland bureaucrats like Budilovich had been trained to interpret local disputes mainly as clashes of nationalities and to perceive local activism as a threat to the Tsarist authorities. After transferring to the Baltic provinces they built on this experience

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<sup>17</sup> See also Stephen Velychenko, "Identities, Loyalties, and Service in Imperial Russia: Who Administered the Borderlands?," *Russian Review* 54, 2 (1995): 188-208; Stephen Velychenko, "The Size of the Imperial Russian Bureaucracy and Army in Comparative Perspective," *Jahrbuecher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 49, 3 (2001): 346-362.

and thus had a large share in nationalizing the conflicts in Baltic region in the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Much the same can also be said about the role of "ex-Varsovian" bureaucrats in the Northwestern provinces. For officials like Budilovich the Warsaw years were an experience of duty at the front. These officials perceived Poland as a battlefield where the interests of the Empire, its indivisibility or even its sheer existence was at stake.

<33>

The general pattern of permanent circulation created experts of the peripheries like Budilovich whose service in other provinces made sense to the Imperial centre. As these officials were moved around in a system of rotation they carried their ways of thinking from one province to another. In the end they facilitated a much-homogenized perception of various local conflicts. These clashes were understood to be quite homologous, regardless of all of their local peculiarities. And to a certain extent this very perception contributed to a process in which the many local conflicts indeed became more alike – since the Tsarist bureaucrats increasingly favoured the very same set of policies in originally quite distinct regions.

<34>

Some of these new experts on the peripheries pointed to their own expertise when it came to promoting their careers. They claimed to be authorities in the intensive public debates on how to deal with the many non-Russian territories of the Empire. They would back up their claims by stressing their own years of service in these provinces and thus could point to their own knowledge of the ills of the borderlands.

<35>

Higher officials – like governors – rarely participated in public debates but employed this argument in the internal correspondence with the central institutions. Others, like academics such as Budilovich, were quite active in making public use of their own status as experts on the non-Russian peripheries. Budilovich, for example, published frequently on the nationality issue and the many corresponding "questions". He was a fiery opponent of any projects of non-Russian autonomy. His polemic publications drew a rather dark picture of what would become of the Empire if any concessions were made to such local, and particularly Polish, demands. Budilovich portrayed this as a first step towards the dissolution of the multinational Empire.<sup>18</sup>

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Of course, he was not the only one to share these kinds of views. Men like Nikolai Lavrovskii or Platon Kulakovskii were also active figures who operated at the interlocum of academic work, official service

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<sup>18</sup> See Budilovich, *Vopros ob okrainakh Rossii*.

and publishing ambitions.<sup>19</sup> All of them could point to many years of duty in the borderlands and presented themselves accordingly as "experts on the peripheries" – with reference to their own Imperial biographies. In this respect, having an Imperial biography was a good starting point for such claims to expertise and self-entitlement.

<37>

As a contrast one could point to Sokrat Starynkevich. His vita demonstrates that service at many different places in the Empire did not necessarily lead towards a perspective in which the "Russian cause" was perceived as endangered. Starynkevich was never obsessed with the so-called "rusское дело" neither did he opt for a further nationalization of the Empire. He was concerned about quite different issues. Starynkevich' worldview was strongly influenced by technocratic visions of modernity. According to his diary, his image of the Empire builds on the experience of its persistent backwardness – a backwardness that he had encountered in the many places of his Imperial career. In his view, technique-based modernity promised a quick way of moving on from a low stage of development. As an engineer he was convinced that technical innovations would have a very deep impact on the social-cultural transformation of society as a whole.

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»Whenever he proposed further investments in the Warsaw's metropolitan infrastructure he was quick to argue that improved sanitary facilities would have a very far-reaching positive influence on urban life in general. He argued that many of the ills of the metropolitan centres – such as prostitution, high levels of crime or high children's mortality – would be quickly overcome by modernizing measures, such as a new sewage or street lightning system.<sup>20</sup>

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Starynkevich was certainly thinking in Imperial terms. He understood himself as being a part of an Empire-wide operating elite of engineers. At the same time Starynkevich emphasized the supra-

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<sup>19</sup> On Lavrovskii see A. S. Budilovich, *Pamiati N. A. Lavrovskogo* (Yuriev, 1899); K. Y. Grot, "Pominki po prof. I. I. Pervol'fe," *Varshavskie universitetskie izvestiia*, no. 3 (1892), 1-34; K. Y. Grot, *N.A. Lavrovskie (nekrolog)* (St. Petersburg, 1900); K. Y. Grot, *Braťia P.A. i N.A. Lavrovskie kak deiateli nauki i prosveshcheniia* (Leningrad, 1927); N. I. Ivanov, *Pedagogicheskie trudy N. A. Lavrovskogo. Posviashchaetsia ego pamiati* (Yuriev, 1900). On Platon Kulakovskii – who was an active member of the *Russkoe sobranie*, the *Russkoe okrainnoe obshchestvo* and the *Vserossiiskii natsional'nyi soiuz* – see Frank Golczewski and Gertrud Pickhan, *Russischer Nationalismus. Die russische Idee im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Darstellung und Texte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 61-62; L. P. Lapteva, "Slavianskii vopros v mirovozzrenii P. A. Kulakovskogo (po archivnym materialam)," in *Slavianskaia ideia: Istorii i sovremennost'*, ed. V. A. D'iakov (Moscow: ISB RAN, 1998), 111-126; D. A. Kotsiubinskii, *Russkii natsionalizm v nachale XX stoletii* (Moscow: Russkaia Pravda, 2001), 30-37 and 149-151; Y. I. Kir'ianov, *Russkoe Sobranie 1900-1917* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2003), 53-54.

<sup>20</sup> See Malte Rolf, "Imperiale Herrschaft im städtischen Raum. Zarische Beamte und urbane Öffentlichkeit in Warschau (1870-1914)," in *Russlands imperiale Macht. Integrationsstrategien und ihre Reichweite in transnationaler Perspektive*, ed. Bianka Pietrow-Ennker (Cologne: Böhlau, 2012), 123-153.

national composition of this mobile community. In his diary he frequently criticized his contemporaries who tried to divide the communality of engineers along ethnic lines. As he wrote quite frankly at one point in time: "There is no such thing as a Polish or Russian engineer. What a stupid thought. We are all engineers. This is the only thing that matters."<sup>21</sup> Such convictions enabled Starynkevich to establish close ties with the indigenous Polish and Jewish elites of Warsaw. In the end this surely influenced his decision to stay in the city after his retirement and to choose a Warsawian cemetery as the place for his last rest.

<40>

But one should not forget that Starynkevich still remained an Imperial official. This was clearly reflected by the mental map sketched out in his diary notes. Of course, Starynkevich viewed Warsaw as an integral part of the indivisible Empire. At the same time he placed the city within a net of other Imperial peripheral metropolitan centres – a net consisting of urban nodal points that stretched from Riga via Warsaw to Kiev and Odessa. Besides St. Petersburg these cities marked his main points of references. Due to his Imperial biography these were the places he knew best himself, as he had served in many of them for some time.

<41>

This perception of the interrelatedness of the Imperial borderlands and respectively their cities points to a more general phenomenon of that time. This presents as a form of networking that was stimulated by the very patterns of mobile careering at the peripheries of Empire. Regardless of their political beliefs and professional views, this mobility within the border regions facilitated a way of thinking in which the peripheries were seen as one larger unified entity. Both protagonists - Starynkevich and Budilovich - differed greatly in their perception of the ills of the Empire and with regard to the "solutions" they proposed to the debated questions of their time. But both – as so many other contemporaries with Imperial biographies – shared the notion of the peripheries as being one larger entity of the Empire. Their personal experience of an Imperial vita was transferred into a homogenizing view on the various borderlands. Regardless of all their obvious local peculiarities, the peripheries were increasingly regarded as something quite similar and thus could be summarized under the overarching and unifying label of the "okraina". An *okraina* that would be seen in sharp contrast to those territories that were regarded as the "Russian heartland" - as the "korenniaia russkaia zemlia".<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Starynkiewicz, *Dziennik 1887-1897*, 163.

<sup>22</sup> For publications in this respect see e.g. Budilovich, *Vopros ob okrainakh Rossii*. Similary A. N. Druzhynin, A. I. Tochitskii, "Tsarstvo Pol'skoe na russkom rynke". *Opyt podscheta tovarnogo obmena okrainy s tsentrom v svyazi s ee proizvoditel'nymi silami. Vypusk 1* (Warsaw, 1900); G. A. Evreinov, *Natsional'nye voprosy na inorodcheskikh okrainakh Rossii. Skhema politicheskoi programmy* (St. Petersburg, 1908); D. T. Privislins and A. N. Druzhynin, *Rossia i ee okraina* (Kiev, 1903); N. D. Sergeevskii, "Biblioteka Okrain Rossii"; P. A. Kulakovskii, "Okrainy Rossii".

<42>

The circulation of elites at the peripheries as the basic pattern of elite mobility of the Russian Empire strongly promoted this notion of *okraina* as one larger entity. No doubt, the individual contemporaries – like Budilovich or Starynkevich – had very different ideas of how to deal with this entity and proposed a variety of often conflicting strategies of how to enforce Imperial rule here. Budilovich for example called for state-sponsored pressure to export Orthodoxy and Russian culture to the non-Russian borderlands. Starynkevich on the contrary evinced very little interest in such a Russian civilizing mission, but was rather obsessed with bringing modernity to the periphery. However, even for him the relationship between the periphery and the centre was quite clear: It was the role of St. Petersburg to push the modernization of the *okraina*. Thus Starynkevich subscribed to a certain spatial hierarchy just as much as Budilovich did – regarding the Imperial capital as the promoting centre of transformation.

<43>

Budilovich and Starynkevich also shared the notion of a basic dualism that structured the Imperial space – the dualism of *okraina* and heartland, or, in other words, the binary model of an advanced centre and a subordinated periphery.

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Later on, the perception of such dualism and the notion of a similarity of the different *okraina*-landmarks gave birth to calls for a consistent and standardized overarching *okraina*-policy. These demands were more and more frequently articulated in public debate after the revolution of 1905. Budilovich's later writings are a good example here – and they also clearly demonstrate to what extent general perceptions of the peripheries had changed by this point.

<45>

In his earlier publications of the 1870s Budilovich had still stressed the diversity of the peripheries, their languages, cultures and people. These were the times in which one could still have a positive attitude towards diversity. This had changed by 1900: at the turn of the century, and even more so after the revolution of 1905, an overall obsession with unity, lack of ambiguity, clear cut definitions and markers of identity had become far more dominant. This points to the longer-term process in which a perception of Imperial diversity and its fragmented nature gave way to a generalizing binary concept of Imperial space: the apparently clear duality of the heartland and the one larger periphery.

<46>

This notion was crucial to the rising movement of Russian nationalists who called for stronger nationalizing policies in the *okraina*. It is far more than an accidental coincidence that many of the nationalists came from such borderland regions, or that many of them also looked back on a personal

Imperial biography with years of service or work at a variety of places in these *okraina*-territories.<sup>23</sup>

<47>

But it is important to stress that it was not only the nationalists who ventilated this dual notion of Imperial space. Starynkevich may serve as example here that the basic perception of this spatial hierarchy was shared also by contemporaries who even openly criticized all the nationalizing efforts of the "Russifiers". It was the biographical experience of an Imperial diversity in the borderlands that contributed to the rise of the "collective singular" of the *okraina*. Regardless of the very diversity of the borderlands a concept of *okraina* could be easily homogenized in a more abstract sense and could be seen as a singular larger entity. Thus, Starynkevich and Budilovich both bear witness to the strong mental impact which an Imperial biography had in the Russian Empire.

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<sup>23</sup> See e.g. Manfred Hagen, *Das Nationalitätenproblem Russlands in den Verhandlungen der III. Duma 1907-1911* (Phil.Diss., University of Göttingen, 1962); Kotsiubinskii, *Russkii natsionalizm*; Aleksei Miller, *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism: Essay in the Methodology of Historical Research* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008).