

THE GOLDEN AGE OF "PROVINCIAL HUMANITY" AND PATTERNS OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT¹

SERGEI I. RYZHENKOV

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1997 a group of specialists from the International Institute for Humanities and Political Studies and the East European Research Centre at Bremen University carried out a pilot research project, resulting in the publication of *Politics and Culture in Russian Province: Novgorod, Voronezh, Saratov, and Sverdlovsk*.² The project's principal aim was to investigate the possibility of applying socio-cultural and historical approaches to political studies of Russian regions.³ In addition, the project tested hypotheses concerning "patterns of regional development," exploring the possibilities for institutional transforma-

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1. The expression "provincial humanity" is taken from a nineteenth-century novel by N. Leskov, *Na nozhakh* [With daggers drawn]. In our view, the phrase "pattern of regional development" was mainly established during each region's "golden age". The golden ages of each of the regions studied were associated with the factual or sometimes even formal granting of "capital status" to these regions' administrative centres. The city of Novgorod was the capital of a Novgorod republic between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. Towards the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth Saratov experienced a period of turbulent growth, far exceeding that of neighbouring regions. The city became the center of a vast area, encompassing the whole of the Lower Volga, and its tremendous growth earned Saratov the appellation "capital of the Volga." In the 1930s, Voronezh became the capital of the Central Black-Soil oblast', where rapidly expanding economic and social processes were played out. Although it is unofficial, Ekaterinburg is today commonly acknowledged as the capital of the Urals.
 2. S. Ryzhenkov, G. Lyukhterkhandt and A. Kuz'min, eds., *Politika i kul'tura v rossiiskoi provintsii: Novgorodskaya, Voronezhskaya, Saratovskaya, Sverdlovskaya oblasti* (Moscow, 1999). The authors of the regional accounts were Mikhail Zherebyat'ev, Grigorii Kozlov, Ekaterina Rozina, Ol'ga Senatova, Vsevolod Smirnov, Aleksandr Filippov, Andrei Yakurin. This book was also published in German: G. Luchterhandt, S. Ryschenkow and A. Kusmin, eds., *Politik und Kultur in der russischen Provinz: Nowgorod, Woronesh, Saratow und Jekaterinburg* (Bremen, 1998).
 - 3 See G. Luchterhandt, *Parteien in der russischen Provinz: politische Entwicklung in den Gebieten des Ural und der Wolgaregion* (Bremen, 1998), pp. 225, 233; G. Luchterhandt, "Politics in the Russian Province: Revda and Kinel'," *Europe-Asia Studies* 29:1 (1997).

tion in cultural, societal, and political spheres.⁴ This chapter is principally a collective effort composed by members of the above-mentioned pilot project. However, the author bears full responsibility for possible errors and omissions.

The central task of this research was to specify each region's particularities, determining the parameters of regional identity and the means of its reproduction. We discovered what we believe to be significant recurring events in the histories of these regions, and a co-relation between seemingly unrelated phenomena; specifically, semantic nuclei occurred both diachronically and synchronically in different spheres of the transformational processes in these regions. These basically consistent sets of metamorphoses we will call "patterns of regional development."

The most consistently recurring and important features of these patterns were the structure of regional authority and the cultural preferences of the regional community. We observed a subtle but definite correlation between political, social and cultural preferences in one or another region. The role of competition among neighboring regions, and between regions and the Centre, was also an important factor in determining the pattern of regional development.

Ultimately, we defined the pattern of development as a type of replication of regional identities in the particular historical context of a region. This pattern was shaped by demands for the preservation of the regional community as such in reaction and adaptation to intrusions from the Centre and to competitive forces presented by neighboring regions - members within the same macro-region. They were also determined by the self-organization of the regional community, which replicated, with various modifications, regional traits already established by history.

The formation and working of a pattern of regional development may be demonstrated in the following manner. The most fundamental functions in the political, social and cultural spheres were formed during the period of settlement and the founding of regional capitals; these were conditioned by the nature of the settlements, their ethnic and confessional makeup, economic specialization, and groupings in the population. Further colonization and the transformation of the country's political and administrative structure, substantially modified many of the norms and rules of interaction amongst population groups, but the basic political, social, and cultural configurations were preserved. Eventually, each region reached a stage of development that permits one to discern henceforth a regional identity. According to our hypothesis then, each of the regions had experienced (or, as Ekaterinburg, is undergoing) a "golden age" of development in its political, social, and economic history. If a territory had existed as a separate political entity before it was incorporated into the Russian

4 S.I. Ryzhenkov, "Saratovskaya oblast': politika i politiki. Materialy k politicheskoi istorii," in K. Matsuzato, A.B. Shatilov, eds., *Regiony Rossii: khronika i rukovoditeli* 2 (Rostovskaya oblast', Saratovskaya oblast'), Occasional Papers on Changes in the Slavic-Eurasian World 34 (Sapporo, 1997), pp. 83-331.

State, the “golden age” may refer to this time of political independence. Novgorod, for example, inherited the basic parameters of its regional identity from its period of independence (1100s-1300s AD). Like the Russian imperial regime, the Soviet system endeavored to unify structures in politics and culture and to decrease the country’s regional diversity, but it could not demolish many regions’ fundamental characteristics; potential and actual regional patterns were preserved. Thus, a “golden age” could occur even in the Soviet period, as was the case in Voronezh. In the post-communist period, despite the centralizing character of the Russian Federation’s transformative initiatives, there is an evident re-emergence of regional specificities in the cultural and political structures and behavior patterns, observed in pre-Revolutionary and Soviet times.

In carrying out the research, alongside the study of what is conventionally called “socio-historical objective reality,” we examined with equal attention the socio-historical reception of this reality in the public consciousness. While attempting to comprehend the basic objective patterns of regional development, we also examined the important concepts of “regional myth and regional ideology.” Consequently, regional identity was comprehended both as a socio-historical phenomenon and as a process of interpretation and articulation of this socio-historical development. In all the regions under examination in this chapter, “golden age” motifs were expressed at the core of the mass rhetoric (in political, commercial, and tourist advertisements), as well as in the regional patriotism and cultural populism among intellectuals and local political society.⁵

But the objective pattern of a region’s development arises, operates, and grows independently of the community’s realization of its region’s path of development. True, the community reacts to manifestations of the pattern: to the social situation, to the violation or observance of norms of cultural and political interactions among different groupings within the region. But these same social situations and norms (with their structures) are formed by the impact of natural, economic, and socio-communicative factors and do not become objects of socio-historical introspection. Nevertheless, during the appearance and dissemination of historical thinking first in science and then in society, the consideration of regional history becomes inevitable. A good illustration of this may be observed in the distinct historical myths about Novgorod between 1810 and 1860: the Decembrists inspired a romanticized myth of a free and republican Novgorod, while the state constructed a myth of Novgorod the Great - a symbol of Russia’s ancient might.

Our methodology proceeds from the fact that political science alone cannot accommodate all the changing variables that could explain without contra-

5 As examples of regional myths one may cite the Sverdlovsk oblast’ administration’s attempt to establish a Ural Republic in 1993; during elections in Saratov Oblast’ the incumbent successfully exploited the image of Saratov as the “capital city of the Volga region.”

dictions how transformations occurred in Russia and in its constituent regions.⁶ We found it necessary also to include in our investigative paradigm an examination of the socio-cultural context of the political transformations taking place in the regions.

As a pilot project, this research precluded the detailed working out of more concrete methods, conditions and phases of regional transformations, stemming from the observed patterns of regional development. Our efforts were concentrated on establishing the admissibility of applying positive assertions in principle to the uncertainty that characterizes social transformation. Attempting to explain both the great variety of regional development and the rapidly increasing regional divergence under the quite uniform transformative conditions of the post-communist period, we resolved to link this uncertainty to the trajectory of previous development, understanding the latter as the unbroken replication in history of specific sets of informal limitations – norms, traditions, customs, unwritten rules – formed over the period of each territory's existence. These institutions decreased this uncertainty by establishing structured interactions among active individual (actors). We are attempting to demonstrate that for Russia the current existence of regionally distinct informal institutions was conditioned by the character of settlement of these territories during the appearance and development of the Russian State, and by various social arrangements during these periods.

Regardless of the parameters to which we assigned responsibility for these institutional transformations – to pre-existing mental constructions, cultural inheritances, intersubjective "natural settings," cultural filters or codes, or "mechanisms for the self-preservation of an institutional matrix," – we discovered that every region possessed its own particular pattern of development; its own specific multi-level complex of informal rules, traditions, customs. And this basic pattern within the institutional milieu seemed largely unresponsive to modifications over long periods despite visible changes in all concrete spheres of society, state, and culture.

We will not follow here Robert Putnam's attempt to explain the historical causes of regional development in Italy by employing the concepts of social

6 See V. Gel'man "Transition po-russki," *Obshchestvennye nauki i sovremennost'* 4 (Moscow, 1997); also his "Politicheskii rezhim i demokraticeskaya oppozitsiya v transformiruyushcheysya Rossii," dissertatsiya na soiskanie uchenoi stepeni kandidata politologii (St. Petersburg State University, 1997). In particular, see the chapter "Tranzitologicheskie kontseptsii transformatsii politicheskikh rezhimov i ikh primenenie pri analize sovremennoi rossiiskoi politiki." See also: V. Gel'man, S. Ryzhenkov, "Politicheskaya regionalistika: ot obshchestvennogo interesa k otrasli znaniya?" *Sotsial'nye issledovaniya v Rossii*. Germano-rossiiskii monitoring (Berlin-Moscow, 1998), pp. 138-187. Vladimir Gel'man and Sergey Ryzhenkov, "Politische Regionalistik in Rußland: politisches Consulting oder neue Wissenschaftsdisziplin?," Ingrid Oswald et al., eds., *Sozialwissenschaft in Rußland*, Band 2 (Berliner Debatte Wissenschaftsverlag, 1997), pp. 106-150.

capital and civic traditions.⁷ It would be foolish to deny the significance of Putnam's work in applying historical development to the study of contemporary politics, which proved especially useful while we were drafting the aims of our pilot research. We are not, however, attempting to explain how democracy works or does not work in regions across Russia; we are striving to determine how and why different regions have responded differently to the so-called "imposed transition." Therefore, the existence of divergences *within* Russian macro-regions (analogous to the north and south as macro-regions of Italy) and migration processes concerning Russia's regions represent those initial circumstances or conditions for the emergence of regions and their individual patterns of development (which American scholars have ignored). Moreover, we do not assume that development progressed in a linear fashion, but rather that it ebbed and flowed over space and time, during periods of both positive and negative conditions.⁸

It should be noted that the current search in Russia for the historical origins and socio-cultural foundations of current political processes represents a renewal of a tradition that had been suspended during the Soviet years, although traces of this tradition could be found in so-called "local history" (*kraevedenie*). In Russia political analysis of regions originated as a study of municipal and state government at the regional and local levels. Pre-Revolutionary historical empirical investigations - such as A. Gradovskii's work on the system of government in Great Novgorod⁹ and A. Lokhvitskii's attempt to create a "theory concerning the province"¹⁰ - were all based on an analysis of political and administrative traditions in Russian history and their relation to socio-cultural traditions.

7 Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (New Jersey, 1993), pp. 121-185.

8 The conditions are drawn from the strict necessities of methodology. See E. Goldberg, "Thinking About How Democracy Works," *Politics and Society*, 24:1 (1996), pp. 12-15. But it is clear that an interpretive approach would not lessen the effect of the data (the divergences within the north and south regions of Italy, migration of large segments of the population, "drops" in accumulations and effectiveness of social capital, and manner in development of civic traditions in the north).

9 A. Gradovskii, "Organy mestnogo samoupravleniya," in *Sobranie sochinenii v 9 tomakh*, vol. 9, part 3 (St. Petersburg, 1903). In general, Gradovskii had a tremendous influence on the studies that followed. He may be considered the father of the political "regionology" in Russia.

10 A. Lokhvitskii, *Guberniya: Ee zemskie i pravitel'stvennye uchrezhdeniya* (St. Petersburg, 1864). The author distinguished between gentry-ruled and bureaucratic-ruled provincial governments (Siberia, Astrakhan, Archangelsk, Olonets belonged to the latter). Lokhvitskii remarked that there was no "society" in bureaucratic-ruled provinces. The writer held that Russian provinces were formed strictly upon artificial and administrative basis, whereas the English equivalents were formed historically by means of social processes.

A typical scholarly investigation of the period is the classic, "legal-historical study" by I. Blinov, entitled *Governors*.¹¹ In this work, Blinov outlined the history of the governors from their creation by Peter I to the 1890s. In essence the book explored several basic parameters: 1- the relationship between state and society; 2- the link between formal laws and informal practices; 3- the dual nature of the governor's duties; 4- linear administrative relations between the central government and governors, and between governors and zemstvo (i.e. after the reform of 1864); 5- the juxtaposition of periods of reform to those of routine government conduct. Noting the persistent preservation of the structure of the first four parameters forced the author to conclude that the essence and functions of governance, as far as local institutions and their relation to central authority were concerned, did not substantially change over the period. Even the reform of 1864, which appeared to have introduced crucial changes in governors' duties,¹² did not alter the fundamental structure of local government; and the so-called "counter reforms" of 1889-1892 further solidified it. The character of local institutions' development was historically conditioned, and then supported and preserved by the autocracy, not interested in decreasing its own power, and by socio-cultural traditions.

This "native" Russian historicism was not transformed into any kind of strictly scientific method by the social and political changes of the twentieth century in Russia. There was without doubt, however, a tendency towards rationalizing this historicism, and both scholars¹³ and cultural figures¹⁴ sought answers to their political questions in the history and culture of Russia and its constituent regions.

11 I. Blinov, *Gubernatory* (St. Petersburg, 1905).

12 Governors, who until 1864 had not been concerned with peasant self-government, now were obliged to become involved in this issue. The court system was separated from the governors' administrative duties, the governors' role as guardian or steward was reduced, while society's responsibilities were expanded.

13 See also A. Kizivetter, *Mestnoe samoupravlenie v Rossii X-XIX stoletiya: Istoricheskii ocherk* (Moscow, 1910). S. Vitte, *Samoderzhavie i zemstvo* (Stuttgart, 1903, Second Edition). In the last "note" sent in 1899 from S. Witte's Ministry of Finance to the Minister of Internal Affairs, he made a poignant comparison between local self-government and government in the West and in Russia; the issue of self-government in an autocratic system versus that in "constitutional" systems was raised. The author argued that the Russian autocracy in a formally legal and in the traditional sense was incompatible with the institution of local self-government that might claim administrative authority.

14 For example, D. Mordovtsev, *Desyatiletie russkogo zemstva* (St. Petersburg, 1877). Mordovtsev, a famous writer, historian, and publicist of the time, gave a wide overview of zemstvo activities from more than ten guberniyas. In particular he discerned that one or another event in the provinces (for example, railway construction by the Saratov zemstvo in the 1860-70s) had its roots in regional history, customs, traditions, and rules for informal interactions of various groups.

2. PATTERNS OF DEVELOPMENT IN FOUR REGIONS

Novgorod Oblast'

During the Golden Age of Novgorod - between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries - Novgorod the Great was an independent state with a complex structure and hierarchy of authority. The entire subsequent history of Novgorod was characterized by military interventions and repressions by Moscow (and neighbouring European states), by the Center's discriminatory measures, leading repeatedly to the population's near complete displacement, by unfair competition with St. Petersburg, and a traditional rivalry with Pskov. The wars waged against Novgorod by tsars Ivan III and Ivan IV, the Time of Trouble early in the seventeenth century, the events at the close of the eighteenth century, and finally World War II each displaced practically the entire population of Novgorod.

Each new wave of settlers struggled to assert itself in this situation of great uncertainty. However, the region's rules of mutual interaction did not have to be worked out from scratch because various influential factors remained constant: pressure from the Center and Novgorod's dependence on it, competition with neighbouring regions, and the peculiarities of the local economy. Sooner or later new settlers found a way to solve the initial uncertainty, and regional survival became secure through those stable factors that influenced Novgorod's internal relations, its relations with the Centre and with neighbouring regions. The solution that was developed resembled a military organization: unified command at the regional level, and subordination to the central authorities. For over 500 years the only manner in which the region could exist as an entity was to combine strict order internally with loyalty to the central government. Any extraordinary events, however, would lead to the temporary erosion of the region's boundaries, including its complete disappearance as an administrative unit.

At the same time, several factors allowed the region quite quickly to restore its regional identity. The central authorities' repressive administrative measures (motivated by their fears of Novgorod's renewed political independence), the region's paths of trade and economic forms (inherited from its former independence and semi-independence), the temporary elevations of the city's status (as under Peter I), the presence of cultural monuments (creating a specific local milieu), and finally, the influx of populations from bordering areas all promoted the prompt restoration of the region's identity following such crises. In the second half of the nineteenth century, recognition of Novgorod's cultural importance to Russian statehood gave legitimacy to the continuous relationship between the past and the present. From that moment, it becomes possible to determine the region's pattern of development more clearly.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Novgorod's contemporary cultural life exists exclusively on the basis of its regional history. Architectural monuments, monumental paintings and iconography from the Golden Age, and some more

recent artifacts, define the region's cultural content.¹⁵ Archaeological excavations and restoration work have created not only the material basis for cultural practices, but the specific milieu of Novgorod's intelligentsia.

In Novgorod Oblast' today the political process may be characterized by the high degree of solidarity within the political community. This tendency was first noted between 1990 and 1993, when the two opposing political factions, conventionally called "reformers" and "conservatives," managed to reach a consensus on numerous issues. A similar concordance between the legislative and executive branches of government can be observed to this day; issues are resolved outside of ideological demands, even though the head of the oblast' administration since 1991, M. Prusak, belongs to the federal "reformers's camp." In general, the structure of power in Novgorod Oblast' may be characterized as a limited one-man rule. The oblast' administration makes the most important decisions and commands crucial resources. In this area the administration controls the regional Duma and organs of local self-government. Moreover, a large number of these command-subordinate relationships have been institutionally formalized. At the same time, the Duma and other players in the political process, - parties, interest groups, and local self-governments - possess some functional independence within the framework of their own activities.

Since 1990 the region has been experiencing a kind of political and administrative renaissance - a new stage in the symbolization of the region's historical inheritance - a process dating from the 1860s and experiencing several renewals (especially during and after World War II) and crises. Several ancient terms have entered into today's political vocabulary; for example, *veche* [assembly] and *posadnik* [major]. At the same time, Novgorod, as the regional capital, still preserves the traits of a remote, provincial town.

The consensus established between governmental bodies on the one hand, and between government and society on the other, was and continues to be based upon recognition of the value of historical legacy, requiring great energy in the realization of various projects. Novgorod's political and economic dependence on the central government, the unfair competition with St. Petersburg, as well as traditional competition with Pskov Oblast' demand that political and administrative practices become innovative under the guidance of the regional administration, and that all existing material, symbolic, and social resources be available for the regional administration's exploitation. Only in this way does it become possible to attract new resources. For this purpose it is essential to unite the major actors in political, cultural, and economic processes

15 "V. Povetkin's musical theatre functioned as an active institution for propagandizing an ancient Russian musical and ethnographic heritage... V. Smirnov's iconographic style of painting represents a kind of synthesis between ancient and modern traditions. And as in the past, in Novgorod today practical art is linked to the porcelain factory... Even rock musicians are constantly making references to traditional and historical themes" (*Politika i kul'tura v rossiiskoi provintsii*, p. 55).

as much as possible (of course, within certain institutional limits), as well as to determine each actor's role accurately and simplify procedures for making decisions. A thorough institutionalization has become necessary to guard against the detrimental actions of central authorities and the regional opposition.

In fact, power is organized in a way similar to military mobilizations, with a functional division of responsibilities: the oblast administration forms an attack force, the Duma provides it with support, and in carrying out massive campaigns administrative levers are utilized. Characteristically, in the 1993 election to the Russian Duma the regional branch of the federal party of power – PRES – received twice as many votes in Novgorod than the Russian average, and that was because one of the national PRES leaders had been the head of the Novgorod oblast' administration, Prusak.

In 1914 Governor M. Islavin wrote: "Overall, Novgorod is quite conservative. Poorly developed trade and industry, the complete absence of important public figures and an inert city life... create conditions under which the local administration requires no especial effort to promote the [central] government's views and undertakings." And today, the promotion of such "views and undertakings" is just as easy, except that they no longer emanate from the central government, but the governor himself, who prefers to implement views and undertakings that correspond with those of the centre.¹⁶ In a sense, this is an historical consequence of the frequent depopulations Novgorod and its environs have experienced, of discriminatory measures by various occupiers (the most recent case being the repression of participants in the restoration of Novgorod and the local intelligentsia in post-war years), and finally, of the need to compensate for shortages of material resources.

Voronezh Oblast'

Voronezh was founded in 1586 as fort on the Russian state's border, situated on the edge of the "Wild Steppe" to defend against raids from southern neighbours, nomadic peoples, and peasants fleeing onto the steppe. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Voronezh region was bordered on one side by Moscow and its environs; on the other its borders washed into the Wild Steppe. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the region became a transitional migration point on the path to the southern territories. After this the region experienced several territorial transformations. In the 1920s and 1930s Voronezh Oblast' received a more solid form, clarifying its traditionally ambiguous borders: Voronezh became the "Capital of the Central Black-Soil Region," including six neighbouring oblasts. Thus, these were the years of Voronezh's Golden Age, the region's blossoming, when the capital and region experience tremendous and rapid growth. During the 1950s and 1960s the region underwent a sort of second Golden Age, because of its industrialization

¹⁶ *Politika i kul'tura v rossiiskoi provintsii*, p. 56.

and Voronezh's central position during the existence of the Central Black-Soil Economic Administration.

Thus, Voronezh started out as an intermediary that traded ideological, political, and cultural content between the central authorities and the "Wild Steppe." Acting as the agent of the central government, Voronezh came to symbolize that government for the steppe lands. In this capacity Voronezh came to express not only the interests of authority at the Centre, but also the interests of those who lived on the steppe. In these transactions the region's own interests came into existence. The guberniial reforms - introduced in the reign of Catherine II and in the 1830s - institutionalized this role of intermediary by permitting the governor of Voronezh to regulate the aforementioned transactions independently.

The region was also characterized by an indeterminate social structure. Under pressure from central authorities, Voronezh had experienced social and ethnic transformation since its founding: the enforced dissolution of cossack hosts in the eighteenth century, the liquidation of tiny landholders (*odnodvortsy*), the assimilation of Ukrainians, etc. Social mingling continued after first and second world wars, and following collectivization and industrialization. Ultimately, the most indicative characteristic of the region is the contrast between rural and urban (i.e. the city of Voronezh) populations. This juxtaposition - a repetition of earlier contrasts between Voronezh and the steppe - was confirmed in the Centre's and the local population's consciousness during the 1950s industrialization and its decline in the following decades.

The pattern of development in Voronezh Oblast' has been conditioned by a certain geographic and social "erosiveness" of its territory and population. The inclusive notions of regional identity were established at a time when the population thought of themselves as being a part of a larger whole than Voronezh itself.

From the 1930s to the 1950s this "expansionist" regional identity was institutionalized by incorporating historical elements from the past. This process influenced the formal principles of the regional government's internal organization and its relations with the Centre. Voronezh Oblast' devised an agrarian version of the ruling ideology, provided the Centre with personnel, and sent out representatives of folk culture, revised in Soviet fashion.

Today Voronezh's actual regional unity and its formal boundaries are not in harmony. The region seems to consider itself authorized to patronize neighboring regions and tries to appear as if it were acting on behalf of the entire Central Black-Soil region in relation to the Centre. Voronezh, along with Vologda, is one of the capitals of agrarian Russia, and in the 1990s it is the capital of Red Russia.

The ruling group that came into power in 1996 had been forming since the beginning of the decade. It appears that while the group would like to preserve the nucleus of the traditional agrarian ideology, it is also aspiring to return to the economic golden age by utilizing its industrial and technological potential.

This group began to procure its political resources from its alliance with the renewed Communist Party, though in a specifically Voronezh manner. In this way, Voronezh Oblast' became one of the capitals of the patriotic left movement in Russia, thereby expanding its geographic boundaries. The leader of this policy was the chairman of the Oblast' Legislative Assembly, I. Shabanov. He became the chairman of the Central Black-Soil Association of Representative Organs, and later won the gubernatorial election.

It is significant that, as was the case with past administrative heads appointed by the central authorities, the newly elected governor is perceived by the electorate not as a figure representing the interests of agrarian or Red Russia, or of the Central Black-Soil region, but as a figure more representative of the federal authorities. This perception is strengthened by the Oblast' Statute that establishes a parliamentary-presidential form of government (although this was viewed as a pure political action since the Statute was adopted in confrontation with the previous pro-Yeltsin administration). The Oblast' Law on Local Self-Government also envisions a leading role for representative organs. It is noteworthy that Voronezh parliamentarians see the representative form of government as a revised version of Soviet power.

In the intraregional structure of this developed agrarian region binary relations characteristically predominate. The nature of each dichotomous element is representative of different sides of the political whole. In the conquest of the region Voronezh was simultaneously acted as an outpost of the Russian state on the Wild Steppe and, as part of the steppe, it was "civilized" by Moscow. In the Soviet period industrialization created a sort of urban variety of "folk culture," while the regional authorities continued to behave as though they represented agricultural interests alone. In the epoch of competitive elections, the regional authorities continue to propound an agrarian-oriented ideology. Duality also determines Voronezh's cultural profile. Folk choral music is the basis of culture in the region. The large influx of people from the rural Black-Soil areas into the city of Voronezh in the first ten to fifteen years after World War II significantly increased the popularity of rural folk culture, though it underwent significant transformation under the urban conditions, so foreign to it. Voronezh province is the birth place of M. Pyatnitskii, founder of the first professional Russian folk choir.¹⁷ In the post-war years the Russian Folk Choir of Voronezh was established, and in 1968 it was awarded the title "Academic."¹⁸

17 In 1991 a monument was erected to M. Pyatnitskii.

18 "As early as the 1940s and 1950s all varieties of culture were receiving every kind of support from the local establishment. This tendency was also noticeable in cadre policy in the region's 'culture building.' A typical example was the appointment in the early 1980s of Yu. Naumov, a composer, song writer, and bayan player, as director the opera theatre. Such a policy continues to this day: the current director of the opera theatre is Yu. Anisichkin, while the main producer is A. Zykov, both having received musical training mainly as bayan players" (*Politika i kul'tura v rossiiskoi provintsii*, p. 73).

The rural themes, in which the country folk's worldview is expressed, are often found in the literature produced in Voronezh. This literature has been described as following in the traditions of Aleksei Kol'tsov and Ivan Nikitin, two nineteenth century poets whose verse was written in a folk style. Furthermore, writers residing in this "capital of rural Russia," writing in this historically sanctioned fashion and utilizing its images, standards, and ideological preferences, have achieved acclaim well beyond the region. V. Ovechkin was the founder of the so-called "village prose," one of the most influential trends in Soviet literature from the 1950s through to the 1970s. G. Troepol'skii, an agronomist by profession, gained fame as the author of a lyrical piece of prose, "Agronomist's Notes." In his writings, no matter what biographical or social references are made, there is discernable a certain sentimentality and a Russophile view of life. Similar in content is Anatolii Zhigulin, a poet and writer of prose. Other Voronezh poets from the 1960s and 1970s also adhered completely to this tradition. Another hugely successful "official poet" and Hero of Socialist Labour, E. Isaev, directly relied upon folkloristic poetics, while writing about collective farm life. The Russian peasant world was the central theme of yet another poet, Aleksei Prasolov, renowned for writing with an aura contradicting official traditions. And the clash between the "earthly" origins of folk culture and the technology and social structure of the industrialized epoch served as a core topic for A. Platonov, one of the most famous Voronezh writers in Soviet Russian literature.

Unofficial literature produced in Voronezh, e.g. the poets V. Isayants, E. Fanailova, A. Anashevich, became known first of all outside the oblast', and these have significance because they internalized the works of O. Mandel'shtam, a poet who was banished to Voronezh in the 1930s. In this manner they demonstrated their contempt for the quasi-folk character of official, dominant culture. Finally, it is characteristic that new cultural trends and forms of activity imported from elsewhere during perestroika have not received noticeable public resonance or development in Voronezh.

Saratov Oblast'

Saratov was founded in 1590 as a fortress on the border of the Russian state. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries several waves of colonists moved into the region, often clashing with one another, and with the authorities. For more than a century (until 1700) military confrontations repeatedly erupted between the representatives of central authority and the population of this and neighboring regions. In the eighteenth century, as the region was colonized and the local commerce developed, the state's political and administrative role transformed as well. It came to regard the population as subjects over whom it held guardianship, and from whom it demanded basic duties.

The main arbiter and executive was a person appointed by the central authority, whose decisions were enforced by military force. This manner of gov-

ernance was, however, frequently found to be ineffective because the military force was too small and the territory too great. In addition, the Russian state's laws and Russian norms had no apparent precedent in dealing with issues pertaining to the life-style of nomadic peoples, Old-Believers, runaway serfs, ethnic peoples from the Volga River area, or settlers arrived from western Europe. The state laws and norms were effective only in areas close to Moscow, where ethnic, religious and cultural diversity was less pronounced. Thus, the hostility of the peoples in Saratov province towards Russian laws and norms led frequently to anti-governmental resistance.

In the first three decades of the nineteenth century, following the guberniial reform that bestowed upon the governor practically unlimited powers to protect administrative and cultural uniformity in all Russian territories, German settlers' rights were removed, repression against Old Believers was intensified, and discrimination against non-Christian peoples was introduced. Strict military order became essential or else it was necessary to enter into secret agreements in order to maintain the status quo.

A return to partial martial law typical of earlier times, when the region was on the frontier, was not in the interests of any of the affected groups, benefiting greatly from the increased commerce. At the same time, the region's prosperity, not to mention the prosperity of the governor and other appointed officials, depended more on the fortunes of discriminated groups than on favours granted by central authorities. The regional government chose to enter into an informal agreement with discriminated groups who were also the economic leaders of the region. As much as possible, the regional government closed its eyes to cultural plurality and deviations from customary Russian norms, and allowed Old Believers and non-Slavic peoples to observe their individual practices.¹⁹ It is precisely at this time, during the tenure of governor Panchulidzev and his successors, that surplus local wealth was created and the first shoots of professional culture and enlightenment appeared.

Between the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the practice of co-operation among various groups became institutionalized although, as before, it was not reflected in any formal statutes. A system based on adapting state policy and injunctions to local interests had proven quite effective, while zemstvo reforms at least partially legalized this system, producing a first and second industrial booms. At the beginning of the twentieth century Saratov was leading Russia in its rate of economic development. The period between 1890 and 1923 were Saratov's golden age.

These historical conditions gave rise to a culture that was peculiar to Saratov. The significance of direct patronage, e.g. the establishment of the Bogolyubov Museum, and indirect patronage, e.g. governmental authorities

19 For example, an ukaz from 1829 that discriminated against Old Believers was ignored by Saratov governors because many wealthy merchants were members of the sect. N.M. Nikol'skii, *Istoriya russkoi tserkvy* (Moscow, 1985), pp. 325, 340.

using charitable donations from the economic elite which was under legal discrimination to construct public buildings and organize cultural events, made Saratov culture primarily provincial and influenced by central culture only in terms of the mode.

The most vivid example of cultural fellowship can be found in the literature written between 1850 and 1870 by dissidents (both exiled and natives of Saratov), such as N. Kostomarov, the writer D. Mordovtsev, the master of radical thinking among the *raznochinets* class N. Chernyshevskii. Theatre in Saratov was "provincial" but still one of the best ones, in particular in terms of the variety of the actors' native places. Among the descendants of German settlers cultural notables like the writer B. Pilnyak, whose mother's maiden name was von Bogau, and the famous writer of children' literature, Lev Kassil, appeared. At the beginning of the twentieth century several famous painters came from Saratov: V. Borisov-Musatov, K. Petrov-Vodkin, P. Kuznetsov. In 1913 a literary avant-garde group of psycho-futurists called "Mnogougolnik" [Multi-cornered] emerged. And the founding of Saratov University also contributed to the diversity of activities in the cultural sphere.

The more Russia began to take note of Saratov, and the regional infrastructure improved, the more it took in from the world of art and literature. During 1914-1918, "humanitarian paratroopers," to use a current expression, from the two capitals were absorbed into Saratov's long-established atmosphere of tolerance towards alien cultures. When Soviet power was established, it was perceived by the people in the region as something foreign and actually, it was. Possibly for this reason maximum freedom in cultural matters was exercised. Between 1918 and 1923 trends in the arts, in theatre, painting, literature, music succeeded one another as fast as patterns in a kaleidoscope.

In the years preceding, as well as during its golden age, Saratov natives like N. Chernyshevskii and P. Stolypin, became major cultural and political figures on the Russian stage. During this period, the political-administrative order combining formal and informal institutions was renewed and developed to the level that had not been attainable under Panchulidzev's governorship. This renewed combination of formal and informal institutions came to serve as a model for succeeding times.

After the chaotic shake-ups in early Soviet times, including the revision of regional borders, the deportation of more than 300,000 Germans, and the repression against Old Believers and intelligentsia, in 1960-70 new changes brought the regional government once more to a combined system of formal, Soviet institutions and informal regionalism (*mestnichestvo*) that allowed local patronage to operate. Within the limits of the party leadership clan-corporatist system of government with ethnic shades developed. This system was called "shibaevshchina," a term derived from the name of the first secretary of the oblast' committee of the CPSU from 1959 to 1976, A. Shibaev.

Beyond the limits of official culture, the tradition of non-ideological art forms and unrestricted humanist academic studies was preserved. The oblast'

was one of only a few regions in the country where there were attempts to promote alternative political ideas and participation even before perestroika.

When the central government initiated perestroika, and when political and cultural transformations were beginning, Saratov was relatively quick to try other political systems and cultural forms. In culture this was manifested by openness to and co-ordination with capital cities - Moscow and Leningrad, and intense activity in art, literature, and theatre at a highly professional level, though with a strong Saratovo-phile, traditional orientation. In the political sphere, at this same time, several models for interactions among ruling groups were tested. These models combined both elements of "trade" and "combat," authority and society, and the result was that up to 1996 a basic form of power relations, combining pre-Revolutionary practices of regional government with "shibaevshchina," was reestablished.

Thus, regardless of which regime was in power, one observes in the history of Saratov a repetition of one and the same type of administration; alongside official state institutions existed unofficial institutions that fulfilled a most important role in the relations between state authority and society. In large measure relations between regional authority and society were regulated by unwritten conventions and traditions, and not by written laws. Moreover, a high concentration of power - both formal and informal - was vested in a single person, who occupied the leading position in government. In the realm of theatre, art, and literature, a frenzy of activity similar to that once observed in the first decade of this century has now been revived, though with less intensity.

Sverdlovsk Oblast'

The construction of the Ekaterinin state-owned mine was started in 1723. Mining enterprises, whether they were state or privately owned, were placed under direct supervision of central government's Mining Administration and were not subject to any gubernatorial decision. The courts also functioned under a so-called "Mining Regulation" and they were subject to directives issuing from mining administrators. The Mining Administration had a departmental (*otraslevoi*) character and, being accountable only to the emperor, the Senate and the Minister of Finance, mines operated like a "state within a state."

Under such circumstances, conflicts of interest arose between mine operators and the central authorities, but this produced for the mines relative independence even from the latter. In Soviet times, a huge military industrial complex was developed, but this sector also possessed a special departmental character, with the result that directors of these state enterprises were able to enjoy a high degree of autonomy vis-à-vis central authorities and the oblast' committee of the CPSU. Moreover, they managed to exert significant influence on decision-making in the regional party-ispolkom and even in Moscow. This relation between enterprise directors and the party had both a formal and an informal base. Institutional independence was strengthened after the introduction of perestroika, and it peaked in 1993 when an attempt was made to establish a

Ural republic. Although the attempt at independence misfired, wide-ranging powers were granted to the oblast' authorities by the Oblast' Statute (December 1994) and by the Power-Sharing Treaty with Moscow (January 1996). The direction of post-perestroika political development in Sverdlovsk Oblast' differed significantly from the direction followed by national politics. In the oblast' there developed regional parties affecting regional politics, while regional branches of federal parties have had only a minimal influence.

In the 1990s, the traditional mode of regional politics, i.e. the multiplicity of relevant and autonomous governmental bodies and a high degree of formal institutionalization of their interactions, further developed. Unlike during Soviet times, the role of the military industrial complex has significantly diminished and a shift in relations among governmental institutions ensued. Now gubernatorial authorities stand in opposition to the authorities of the oblast' capital, the Ekaterinburg mayorship. Other cities and towns are also beginning to articulate their interests. Moreover, conflicts often go beyond the sphere of various government bodies, drawing segments of the society into the conflicts. Thus, the multiplicity of autonomous governmental bodies guarantees the constant existence of zones of liberal competitions in the government structure itself, as well as in society. This facilitates the development of new forms of cultural and political activities. As a whole, the traditional pattern of development²⁰ was intensified after the collapse of communist regime.

The phenomena of a "mining culture" continue to play a significant role in the present cultural process of the oblast'. In the Urals this "mining culture" generated a specific system of city planning and architecture, and gave birth to a stratum of "mining intelligentsia," as well as various cultural phenomena combined with this stratum. From 1920 to 1970 Soviet industrialization was oriented towards the military industrial complex, creating a very peculiar alloy of social and cultural factors, as well as a series of important phenomena in science, education, and arts of the region. Contemporary "Ural culture" represents a specific regional system for reproduction and translation of culture, which sustains the population's professionalism and their yearnings for the "first grade" in any social activity, despite the constant outflow of intellectuals towards the capitals (Moscow and St. Petersburg). In Ekaterinburg there is no art school devoted to local fashion. Ural values of culture have always been all-Russian. This is why native artists are easily absorbed into cultural scenes in other regions whether they move to Vladivostok or to Moscow.

20 Though there have been fluctuations, the one constant has remained the high probability of protests, which derives from the professional and qualified demographic structure of the population. Frequent disturbances have occurred ever since mining began in the region, during industrialization, at the time of the revolution, and now in the post-soviet period; its climax occurred in August 1991.

3. SOME TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS

Over the period when the Russian state settled and assimilated these territories, elemental norms were formed spontaneously, forcibly, or by agreement to regulate relations between inhabitants, settlers, legal and illegal migrants, and representatives of Moscow's authority. Once a territory was subdued, representatives of the central government often discovered that their own interests differed from the aims and tasks set by Moscow. At the same time, one or another group of settlers achieved considerable economic success, either by being favoured by Russian laws or else by circumventing them. This period was also characterized by protracted armed confrontation with neighboring territories and by the emergence of numerous groups within the region, who were capable of rising against Moscow's authority and its local agents.

The Muscovite state employed mainly repressive measures to suppress any potential resistance, especially if that resistance strove for independence. If resistance appeared in the state's peripheral, disputed or sparsely populated territories, Muscovy would employ repression only in response to armed opposition to the introduction of formal regulations and laws. In each region, a unique configuration of formal and informal relations among various social and ethno-religious groups emerged. Though Muscovy strove to control these configurations as much as possible, its local agents - obliged to introduce the Centre's regulations - were inevitably forced to adapt them to local conditions. This may be called the military-political period.

In the second period, indigenous conditions and customs faded or their effects were reduced; raids by nomadic peoples ceased and the need to repulse foreign powers and suppress the native population declined, while the number of settlers in the territory increased. Initial laws governing relations between the territory and the outside world, including its relations with the central government, changed. Economic specialization of the territory and groups of the population developed. However, these groups still followed their former ways in their relations with Moscow and its representative and amongst each other. This may be called a period of political and economic development.

The third period, "institutionalization-1," is associated with the informal institutionalization of the rules and norms created and transformed in the preceding period. Optimal institutionalization took place if this period was concluded with the region's "Golden Age." In this period regional society emerged, facilitated by the zemstvo idea and its institutions, which were evolving towards parliamentarism. In fact, regional practices and regulations received partial legitimacy during the reforms that had introduced the zemstvos. The central government applied different policies to different parts of the state, which in turn intensified each region's economic specialization and solidified the unique type of administration that each was developing.

During the fourth period, "institutionalization-2," as a result of the First World War and the social revolution, formerly established practices and regu-

lations were revised. A massive, new wave of migration, the repression of large segments of the population, and industrialization completely transformed the formal norms and regulations. However, in the years between the wars and following the Second World War, one could observe a return to past, managerial, politico-administrative, and even social and cultural practices. This revival was facilitated, in particular, by an unofficial regionalism (*mestnichestvo*) that had replaced pre-Revolutionary (mainly informal) gubernatorial independence or its Soviet equivalent. Unwritten rules (sometimes, rules with ethnic nuances) were applied to divide up the spheres of influence in a region's administration and economy. It was precisely during this period that some regions attained their golden age, or else they advanced towards their golden age.

During the late socialist period and perestroika the weakening of central authority as a dominant factor in political and cultural matters led to the reappearance of regional norms from the past. Regional political regimes turned out to be the strongest and most stable. After a period of uncertainty at the beginning of regionalization, these regimes began to display a visible tendency to recreate models for political and social interaction and communication with Moscow and neighboring regions, according to their own regional traditions. At the level of cultural activities we often find "negative self-assertions" in artists' and writers' discourse; anything "alien" is shunned and rejected (typically, Voronezh). Other regions, which specialized in the reproduction of all-Russian standards of culture (for example, Sverdlovsk), continue to realize these kinds of cultural projects.

A comparison of a number of regions reveals several significant geopolitical, socio-demographic, and socio-communicative factors, the nature and combination of which determined quite strictly the regional communities' choices of means and norms in social interactions. Although these factors had definite significance only at the time of settlement, colonization, or conquest, it was exactly in this period that patterns of regional development were established. Though these factors later ceased to be effective and were replaced by new conditions with the passage of time, they disappeared only after they had established the region's irreversible predisposition to one or another type of development.

The migratory transparency of a region basically determines its various geopolitical relations. One must ask the question: is there potential for further colonial expansion across contiguous territory, or does the territory form a cul-de-sac, bordered by foreign lands? Are neighbouring territories already assimilated, or are there natural barriers or foreign borders? These factors create conditions for coexistence and competition among social groups, no matter how these groups relate to each other.

"Transparent" Voronezh province always provided those who were dissatisfied with the established norms and traditions with the possibility to emigrate to other lands, while in provinces adjacent to hard boundaries, Saratov

and Novgorod, dissidents had no other choice but to adapt themselves to the existing conditions. The character of the states located on the other side of the borders, in particular their openness, also affected the social regulation of the border regions.

In Ekaterinburg migratory transparency was always significant at least formally, but this formal transparency was not as important as the degree of its actual availability. The great distance from the center made further migration difficult, and on the other hand, enabled the formation of the Ural macro-region subordinate to Ekaterinburg City. The presence of abundant hinterland within the same macro-region facilitated the development of heterogeneous social norms, where no one group would “grind” against another and no tradition would challenge another. As a result, Ekaterinburg developed as if it were a nation state.

The quantity and quality of communication channels with the central authorities also affected the regions’ internal development. Repressions against Novgorod predisposed it to create a primitive hierarchical order among various political groups and then to entrench this order formally. In contrast, the other three regions’ negotiable relations with the Centre offered them considerable freedom to regulate intra-regional relations. Moreover, Ekaterinburg’s two channels of transmission of influence from central authorities (the usual, and through mining operations) gave birth to a paradigm which remained unchanged throughout all the transformations of internal centres.

It is obvious that the quality of communication channels was related to the status that a territory occupied before it was colonized. Relations were established by accord if the territory had not been a state, as was the case with Voronezh and Ekaterinburg. Repression was the prevailing strategy of central authorities directed against a formerly independent state, such as Novgorod. And finally, an accord, aided by repressive measures, was reached with the Saratov region that had bordered on another independent state.

From these beginnings emanate different types of migration. In the case of Novgorod, the central authority governed migration, but in the other three regions migration was voluntary. However, the native population played only a small role in the case of Novgorod and Voronezh, a significant one in Ekaterinburg, and an especially important one in Saratov.

In a broader chronological perspective, it is essential to point out the persistent influence of each region’s native population (together with the natural surroundings as a whole), regardless of their formal representation or significance within the regional society. In Saratov there was always a Tatar presence. At the same time, such migrants as the Old Believers and Germans played a major role. Although both of them nearly disappeared as groups in the 1930s, they left cultural traces and thus remain part of the region’s heritage. The influence of the native population’s legacy continues to play a decisive role in the case of Novgorod, despite the fact that several generations of Novgorodians were exterminated. The importance of Ural peoples is illustrated by the pres-

ence of mythology, e.g. tales of P. Bazhov, the development of stone carving and decorative metal works.

In accordance with the mentioned three factors - the role of native populations, the character of migrations, communications with the Centre - it is possible to understand the horizontal and vertical interactions in a region's society. In Novgorod there had always been a vertical system of control: "agents of central authority, then controlled settlers, and finally the native population." In Voronezh, there was a relative balance between vertical and horizontal methods of interactions among the three groups, i.e. agents of central authority, controlled settlers, and freely arriving settlers. In Saratov, a horizontal system of interactions prevailed: agents of central authority worked in concert with highly differentiated but internally unified groups of free settlers and native population. In Ekaterinburg there were two levels of horizontal interactions; there were agents of central authority 1 and agents of central authority 2 that together represented the first level. The second level was comprised of controlled and free settlers, and the native population. Between the first and second levels, a vertical line of control dominated.

After considering the combination of factors in each of the regions, one may discern fairly stable, "structural boundaries" between the regions and the Centre. Since the administrative-territorial boundaries have constantly been modified, these "structural boundaries" give the regions the possibility to have some historical identities. In Novgorod's case, the presence of the central authorities in the region is so significant that we think the "boundaries" lie within the region's administrative territory. In Voronezh Oblast' these "boundaries" are blurred. The central authority is wedged in the regional space, while the regional space includes a vast territory much larger than Voronezh's formal administrative territory. Voronezh has become one of the capitals of agrarian and Red Russia. As for Saratov Oblast', its "structural boundaries" roughly coincide with its administrative boundaries. This explains the region's political self-reliance and independence; the region's inhabitants call it the "capital of the Volga." Sverdlovsk's "structural boundaries" lie far beyond the region's administrative boundaries and even partially erode the Centre's "territory," because of the presence of the mining formerly, and now military industrial lobbies in Moscow.

As in the past, any attempt today to alter these "structural boundaries" by either external or internal actors is liable to provoke conflict. In the four regions described above the "boundaries" are more or less firmly fixed. The effect of new external political and social factors, including changes in migration patterns, after the pattern of regional development has been established, is either to confirm the pattern, as in the case of Voronezh and Ekaterinburg, or to introduce corrections into this pattern (the Saratov case). In the case of Novgorod, there is no evidence of new external influences.

The pattern of regional development is not necessarily obligatory in order to affirm the survival of the region as a relatively independent entity. An ex-

ample of negative external influence is provided by two southern towns, one of which had once served as a regional capital, i.e. Azov, and the other, Taganrog, had served once as a major centre in the same region. Because of the Russian central authorities' direct military interferences, neither Azov nor Taganrog became major capitals. At different times several major cities of Ancient Rus' also lost their importance: Rostov the Great, Suzdal', Galich, Ustyug the Great, Yelets. In other periods of Russian history, Tobol'sk lost its status as Siberia's capital, as did Novocherkassk, once the capital of the Don Cossacks.²¹

It is expected that further research into regional development will follow two paths: one will be a more detailed examination of the factors that have influenced a region's choice of institutions, and the other will extend theoretical and methodological principles of research.

21 But clearly the process of becoming a regional capital is not tied only to the past. There are several new cities that are not regional capitals, but which aspire to become more than followers; such cities are represented by Tolyatti in the Samara Oblast', Obninsk in the Kaluga Oblast', and a few others.