

THE REMAKING OF GEOPOLITICAL SPACE AND INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATIONS: THE CASE OF THE BALTIC REGION

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This article adopts the historical neo-institutional approach to analyse the dissolution of the Livonian Confederation and the ensuing reshaping of the Baltic region in the 16th-19th centuries. These historical events are employed to describe the post-bifurcation incorporation of a society in a different social system. Several inclusion models are identified. The centralised model suggests that the incorporated society reproduces the institutions of the incorporating society. Modified institutions are transplanted to the incorporated society within the quasi-centralised model, whilst only selected modified institutions are transferred within the autonomist one. The author analyses mechanisms playing a part in state mergers and emphasises their dependence on the institutional environment of the incorporating society. For instance, a part of Livonia was incorporated in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (PLC) through transplanting PLC institutions, primarily political ones, to the newly acquired territories. To this end, a mechanism was developed to encourage cooperation from the nobility without further stratification. Sweden, however, acted on the autonomist model when incorporating Estland and Livland. Economic, political, and sociocultural institutions, many of which were of hybrid type, were transplanted, whilst socialisation mechanisms and incentives applied to a wider section of the population. The Russian approach, which had at its core security considerations, combined autonomist elements (establishment of hybrid institutions in the new territories) and centralised components (propagation of Russian imperial institutions). The merger mechanisms included the creation of an Ostsee estate system and incentives for the higher estates coupled with repressions against commoners. Overall, the nature of state mergers and institutional transplants depends on whether the incorporated territories have had a history of statehood, another significant factor is the degree of similarity between the institutions of the acquired territories and the metropole.

Keywords:

institutions, institutional transformations, social structure, empire, autonomy

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Introduction

The complexity and political turbulence of the modern world, concurrent integration and disintegration, ethnic conflicts and attempts to redraw post-WWII borders lend particular relevance to the study of institutional transformations in social systems following geopolitical space remaking.

Despite the diversity of approaches to defining this concept [1], institutions are usually viewed as sustainable models of interaction in society or ways of acting and thinking that exist in society independently from individuals [2, p. 20]. Douglass North defines institutions as *the rules of the game* structuring social action [3]. They are often borrowed (transplanted) from another institutional environment. A range of technologies facilitates this process: the modification of the transplant [4], local transplantation within a single region [5], borrowing an institution from the past of the incorporating society [6], and ‘building a sequence of intermediate institutions linking the initial structure with the final one corresponding to the transplanted institution’ [7]. Of much importance is the role of agents through which these transplantations are carried out [8].

Extensive empirical data on institutional transplantations have been accumulated through studying the history of nations. Although the literature offers a thorough analysis of the historical experience of the Anglo-Saxon world [9–11], the Baltic region remains underresearched. Still, there are studies into the law and court system of Swedish-ruled Livonia [12; 13]. The Polish rule of these territories, particularly administration, religious policies, and social transformations in Livonia in the 16th–18th centuries, has also been investigated [14–18]. Authors tend to focus on individual aspects of institutional changes, such as the evolution of economic or political institutions. Society, however, comprises three interconnected and interdependent subsystems: economic, political, and sociocultural [19], which form a whole. Therefore, institutional transplantations should be examined as a complex process encompassing all these areas. Historical institutionalism sheds little light on the *post-bifurcation*¹ inclusion of society into another social system. This case is of great interest as it is usually linked with imperial statehood. In the time of empires, social systems merged through institutional transplantations onto newly acquired lands, whilst preserving the megastate required aligning interests of many subjects. A thorough investigation

¹ The bifurcation point is a historical moment when several trajectories are possible. Near bifurcation points, crises occur. After passing the bifurcation point, society retains its structure or disintegrates.

of transplantation mechanisms and instruments is vital for designing optimal public administration systems in multinational and multiconfessional societies. Moreover, a comprehensive study will indicate possible ways to develop and integrate megastructures and civilisations.

This paper looks at the geopolitical remaking of the Baltic region in the 16th-19th centuries to detect and analyse models for social system mergers and the typical mechanisms and instruments of institutional transformation.

The case under investigation is of interest because it demonstrates the experience of institutional transformations in empires with different public administration models. It also provides an insight into how pre-existing institutions influence the economic *modus vivendi* and determine national mindset and political culture [20]. Both successful and failed institutional transplantations of the past left indelible traces seen to this day. In other words, a detailed analysis of institutional transformations in previous centuries is needed to understand the Baltic region and forecast its development in the 21st century.

Methodology

This study draws on historical neo-institutionalism and focuses on the institutional system as a whole rather than on the behaviour of individuals. Systemic and historical methods are employed to describe the evolution of society; comparative analysis is carried out to classify social integration models.

This paper derives data from the Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire (CCLRE)² and other materials from the Russian State Historical Archive (RSHA).³

Livonia, the first German colony

Let us look at what Livonia was like at the time. At the end of the 12th century, the tribes inhabiting present-day Latvia and Estonia remained pagan [21]. Christianity came to them with the Crusaders, the Danes, and the Swedes. In the middle of the 14th century, the Teutonic Order, a then leading power in the

² Complete collection of laws of the Russian Empire, 2020, available at: http://nlr.ru/e-res/law_r/content.html (accessed 03.07.2020) (in Russ).

³ Russian State Historical Archives, 2020, available at: <https://rgia.su/> (accessed 03.07.2020) (in Russ).

region, incorporated territories sparsely populated by local tribes (Livs, Semigallians, Curonians, Latgarians, and Estonians) into the *Ordensstaat* as *Terra Mariana* — the Land of the Virgin Mary. Also known as Livonia, Terra Mariana became, as Theodor Schiemann put it, ‘the first German colony’ [22]: during the ensuing 700 years, Germans dominated the local elite, as well as the political, economic, and social life of the region.

In controlling most of Livonia, the Order relied on centralism, which engendered basic institutions of redistributive type: state-organised redistribution of wealth, leased property in exchange for service, complaints as the principal channel for commoners to communicate with elites, the unitary political organisation, and communitarianism. Other centres of power were the bishoprics of Curland, Derpt, Oesel-Wiek and the archbishopric of Riga. Cities of the Hanseatic League (primarily Riga) also performed a significant role as they had close trade ties with and supplied grain, wax, fur, and timber to more than 100 economic centres of Europe [23]. The Hanseatic League fostered the spread of German town law and the Law of Lubeck to the region, making the towns independent of feudal lords. The Hanseatic way of trading was peculiar: two or more partners ran the operations; they invested proportionally and shared incomes and losses. Partnerships usually lasted for a year or two, and a merchant would enter numerous collaborations handling various goods. Four offices in Novgorod, Bergen, London, and Bruges made up the top of the League’s hierarchy. They all had their own heads, laws, jurisdiction, and treasury. These offices secured the common interests of their members, dealt with monarchs, and were indispensable hubs in the Hanseatic network [24—26]. The League and its German origin expedited the emergence of basic market institutions: commercial relations, private property, wage labour, profit as a measure of success, federalism, and a subsidiary ideology.

Conflicts between the Teutonic Order, bishops, and the mighty Hanseatic towns were an everyday scene in Livonia. In 1419, the Livonian parliament (*Landtag*) convened to settle the unending disputes. The legislature, which included Teutonic brethren, the clergy, and representatives of the towns, proved unable to ease the internal tension. The flourishing Livonia transformed over time into a religious-political confederation with weak authorities and colonial social stratification (the elite was German, and the lower estates were indigenous). This social arrangement recurrently sparked unrest among peasants. The

Reformation speeded up disintegration. Lutheranism became the leading religion in the Livonian lands [27], provoking religious strife. The Livonian War of 1558–1583 paved the way for the expansion of Muscovy in the Baltic region [28] and cemented the division of the Livonian confederation into several parts, each pursuing a separate historical path (table 1) [21; 23]. This way, the heterogeneity of the south-eastern part of the Baltic region emerged.

Table 1
Rule in different parts of the Livonian Confederation after its collapse

Territory	Polish-Lithuanian Rule	Swedish Rule	Russian Rule
Estland	—	1561–1721 (the Swedish Duchy of Estonia, or Estland)	1721–1918 (the Reval governorate, from 1796 the Governorate of Estonia, one of the three Baltic (or Ostsee) governorates)
Livland	1561–1629 (part of the Duchy of Livonia [or Livland], or Polish Livonia, or Inflanty)	1629–1721 (Swedish Livonia)	1721–1918 (the Riga governorate, since 1796 the Governorate of Livonia [or Livland], one of the three Baltic (or Ostsee) governorates)
Latgale	1561–1772 (part of the Duchy of Livland, or Polish Livonia, or Inflanty, from 1629 the Inflanty [or Livonia] voivodeship)	—	1772–1918 (part of the Vitebsk governorate)
Curland	1562–1795 (a vassal of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and from 1569 of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth)	—	1795–1918 (the Governorate of Curland, one of the three Baltic [or Ostsee] governorates)

Polish-Lithuanian dominance

After the collapse of the Livonian Confederation, its considerable part fell under the influence of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (from 1569, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth), where this territory became the Duchy of Livonia (or Livland), also known as Polish Livonia or *Inflanty*. At first, it was seen only as a military outpost in the continuing struggle with Muscovy. For security reasons, all Livonian castles not engaged in border defence had to be demolished, and the depopulated areas were to be handed over to colonists. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania followed the *centralised* model of social merger, preserving a sole centre and transferring its institutions to acquired lands.

Yet, a U-turn in the policy had to be made soon as the initial merger did not take regional specifics into account. The new approach to Livonia was inaugurated in *Privilegium Sigismundi Augusti*, which granted local estates religious freedom, the right to self-administration, and a certain degree of autonomy. The document was the royal confirmation that the privileges and liberties enjoyed by Livonians under German rule and the existing property relations would remain intact.⁴ The higher estates were naturalised by *Indygenat*. Now cadet branches could inherit estates if the senior line went extinct. The nobles were exempt from the obligation to seek the King's permit to sell property. If a landlord lost his land patent, it was sufficient to furnish two or three witnesses able to testify to his rights for the document to be re-issued. Peasants were left to the will of their landlords allowed to try, punish, and even execute them. Feudal lords also had the right to take over peasant lands to straighten the borders of their fiefs. At the first stage, institutional transplantations in Polish Livonia were nothing other than the externally controlled expansion of Wierland (Virumaa in modern Estonia) law to the entire province [36].

The next stage began in 1582 with the adoption of *Constitutiones Livoniae*⁵ regulating the new law and administrative organisation. The division of the province into districts and the powers granted to their heads reminded those of Royal Prussia. The core institution of self-governance was the regional diet, *Landtag*, whose consent was required for the regional authorities appointed in Warsaw to

⁴ Documents on the History of Accession of Livonia to Poland, 2020, *Vostochnaja literatura. Srednevekovye istoricheskie istochniki Vostoka i Zapada* [Eastern Literature. Medieval Historical Sources of the East and West], available at: http://www.vostlit.info/Texts/Dokumenty/Livonia/XVI/1560—1570/Dok_prisoed_liv_k_polske/text.phtml?id=11871 (accessed 04.07.2020) (in Russ).

⁵ In legal documents of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the term *Livonia* designates the territories of the Livonian Confederation occupied after the Livonian war.

take office, similar to the procedures followed in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. *Constitutiones Livoniae* were not devoid of social novelties: for one, the aristocracy obtained the right to buy the real estate of the urban propertied classes and they, in turn, were let to purchase land, which meant that the division between the estates began to blur. *Constitutiones Livoniae* transplanted modified political and economic institutions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the Duchy of Livonia.

The next stage in the incorporation of the new territories started with *Ordinatio Livonica II* in 1598. This document renamed Livonian districts (*Präsidiate*) voivodeships, and their heads were admitted into the Senate of the Commonwealth. All official posts in Livonia were now available to Livonians, with the reservation that each post had to be successively occupied by natives of Poland, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and Livonia. Livonians were allowed to submit complaints to the Parliament (*Sejm*) and the King. Thereby, the province was already sufficiently integrated into the Commonwealth.

The complete integration ensued in 1697, when the Basic Law of Livonia came into being significantly increasing the privileges of the local aristocracy. Now they could be promoted to administrative positions in any part of the Commonwealth. The legal status of Livonia was equalled to that of Poland and the Duchy of Lithuania, and the inhabitants of the three parts of the country came to enjoy equal rights. The Livonian diet continued to exist separately from the *Sejm*, but its role was limited to spreading information on government policies.

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a federative state, employed the *quasi-centralised* model when incorporating Livonia. New lands were integrated without a change in the number of centres of power. The following technologies were used to that end: extension of local institutions to the entire province and the gradual modification of the institutional environment towards its homogenisation with the incorporating society. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth used incentives, giving privileges to social groups in exchange for loyalty. In the case of Livonia, that social group was the nobility.

Religious homogenisation was also a hugely important instrument of incorporation. Despite having endowed their new subjects with religious freedom, the Polish authorities soon switched to the socialisation, or Polonisation, of Livonia, which consisted in encouraging conversion to Catholicism and spreading the Polish language, particularly in official paperwork [25–27].

The autonomist model was used in Curland (a vassal of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and, after 1569, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth), with some

transplantation of modified institutions. In 1561, Sigismund Augustus gave the territory extensive privileges, which remained in force until the partition of Poland. The King consented to the inviolability of the self-governance of the German aristocracy, the right to practice Protestantism (a modification of the institution of religious freedom), and the rights of the nobility (*Indigenatsrecht*) [21]. Curland was allowed to have a military and commercial fleet. It even purchased two colonies: in Africa (Gambia) and the Caribbean (Tobago) [21; 31]. Curland's vassalage did not lead to political or economic success. On the contrary, it resulted in a crisis and the incorporation of the country into the Russian Empire [27; 32].

The policy of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth towards the collapsed Livonian Confederation defines the former as a *composite state*. Helmut Koenigsberger coined this term in his analysis of the early modern state and the interaction of the monarchial and parliament forms of government. Koenigsberger argued that monarchs of the early modern era could not enjoy absolute power throughout their realms, and their authority coexisted with that of popular assemblies [33, p. 202]. The composite state represented a union where each part or its elite had its own relationship with the sovereign, privileges, laws, and administration system [34]. The monarch had to negotiate tax or military service matters with each territory separately [35, p. 194]. A composite state applied a wide range of instruments and mechanisms of institutional influence in incorporated or vassal lands.

Swedish dominance

Sweden ruled over two parts of the Livonian Confederation — Estland (from 1561) and Livland (from 1629). The former was absorbed into the Swedish Empire in the wake of the Livonian War, whilst the latter remained for half a century under the institutional influence of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The model of Swedish rule in Estland was *autonomist*, with the German structure of power distribution restored and preserved. In 1561, King Eric XIV let the lands keep their old privileges and laws and confirmed the property rights, leaving the feudal possessions in the hands of the local German nobles.

The model employed in Livland was *autonomist* too. Yet, the impact of the Swedish political, economic, and sociocultural institutions was more pronounced there. Swedish kings never approved *Privilegium Sigismundi Augusti*. The lands of the bishoprics and the Teutonic Order became state property, and

soon the Crown started to allot them to the Swedish aristocracy, who often emancipated serfs [36, p. 264]. Considerable Swedish immigration changed the ethnic landscape in Livland and was the reason why Swedish traditions got ingrained there.

Different approaches to Estland and Livland prove that Sweden was a composite state. A substantial rebuilding of the acquired territories was necessary to ensure economic progress, into which Sweden put much effort from the outset. In Estland and Livland, the authorities prioritised the production of grain (rye and barley), most of which was exported to Sweden and Holland. Agriculture was extensive, i.e. the sown area was increased by expropriating peasant lands to the detriment of other spheres.

A composite state tends to decimate centres of power by diluting the influence of independent towns and the aristocracy [37, p. 87]. In the last decades of the 17th century, the Swedes accomplished this task via the so-called *Reduktion* (the return of illegally seized state lands to the Crown). If the former owners agreed to pay rent, they kept their manors as royal tenants; otherwise, the manors were redistributed. Over 80 per cent of the land was taken over by the Crown [38, p. 18]. In Livland, such areas accounted for 5/6 of private agricultural lands.

The pragmatic intention to increase incomes from state lands pushed the Swedish government to improve the life of the lower estates. In 1632, the nobles were deprived of the right to sentence peasants; the assessment and tax systems introduced in 1680 precluded any arbitrariness on the part of the aristocracy. The imperial lands were revalued and carefully charted. Peasant tributes were determined as a function of the property size and the land quality detailed in the *Wackenbuecher*.

Peasants were allowed to enter universities and obtained the right to own property and submit complaints against their landlords to government officials and courts. Landlords, in turn, were severely fined for any violation of the law governing peasant tributes and could no longer use peasants for work in someone else's manors or cut their lands.

The *Reduktion* and the reforms drastically changed the social fabric, especially in Livland. For the aristocracy, the loss of property rights on land was tantamount to the loss of rights overall. The nobility grew dependent on the Crown: aristocrats had to do military or administrative service to continue their usual way of life. The need to pursue a career accelerated the assimilation of the Baltic elite into the Swedish aristocracy. Peasants, for their part, obtained freedom and became proprietors.

The economic and social change went hand-in-hand with political reform. The acquired lands had their local Landtags but had no representation in the Swedish Parliament. (The only exception was Riga due to its extraordinary importance for regional trade.) The unicameral bodies could propose local taxes and submit initiatives to the King or his plenipotentiary in the province — the Governor (later, Governor-General).

The *Landtag*, the main instrument of autonomy, was presided from 1634 by *Landmarschall*. Elected for three years, he was an intermediary between the nobles and the Crown. In 1643, Sweden introduced *Landratskollegium*. This institution, comprised of local noble *Landraete* (councillors), was considered deliberative under the General-Governor. In reality, its functions were even more restricted (generally, because of the internal problems of the nobility).

Sweden attempted to alter the church administration system. In Estland, the Crown appointed the bishop and helped him in his work with the ecclesiastical consistory, whose jurisdiction did not extend to secular matters. In Livland, there emerged the so-called ‘church of preachers’ where the issues of the parish were addressed directly by its minister, making the latter dependent not on the local feudal lord but the Crown. This way, Livonian priests assimilated with the Swedish clergy.

German remained the state language under Swedish rule. Yet, the need to spread Protestantism among the indigenous population forced the government to support the Estonian and Latvian languages and fund education: primary schools, a teacher’s seminary, and a university (in Derpt) were established [21; 27].

The reforms encountered substantial resistance from the German aristocracy (in 1693, King Charles XI dissolved the Livonian *Landtag* because it opposed the *Reduktion*). The Great Famine of 1695—1697 and the Great Northern War of 1700—1721 also impeded change. Some state manors returned to the nobles on bail, and the regulation of peasant tributes was largely ignored.

Overall, Sweden’s political and economic development determined the mechanisms of institutional transplantation — incentives, applied to both the nobility and the peasantry, and socialisation. In contrast to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the focus was on the transplantation of economic and sociocultural institutions.

The Baltic Governorates in the Russian Empire

The integration of Estland and Livland into the Russian institutional system began when the territories were ceded to the Russian Empire following the Great

Northern War. The process broke down into several stages. The first one, which coincided with Peter the Great's reign, was the creation of *status in statu*, as it usually happened within the *autonomist* model. The new lands retained their laws and administration systems, including the rights and privileges of the nobility, estate self-government, Lutheranism, German as the official language, and inequalities in taxation (state taxes were levied only on the peasantry). In Estland and Livland, governors were in charge, subordinate only to the General-Governor controlling both provinces. They represented the Tsar and were responsible for public order, security, and infrastructure maintenance. Governors' deputies and most officials were of German origin. Responsibility for all issues touching on the life of the provinces, self-governance, courts, and the police were vested in *Landtags* gathering once in three years. Their ordinances had the force of law for the population. Only the aristocrats whose families had owned land in the provinces under Teutonic, Polish, and Swedish rule could be Landtag members of full status. Between the conventions of *Landtags*, the provinces were self-governed by *Landraete* elected from the most influential families. Towns were ruled by magistrates representing the urban higher classes and led by German *Buergers* comprising closed corporations (guilds). Taxes due to the Russian Crown equalled those payable under Swedish rule, whilst varying local taxes went to provincial authorities.

Estland and Livland had permission to trade in foreign goods — even those that were not allowed into interior governorates.⁶ Thus, the Baltic provinces were economically distinct from the rest of the empire.

Although most German-Swedish institutions had been preserved, Russia eliminated those at odds with its agricultural policies. The Swedish regulation of peasant tributes was abandoned for good. Peasants were no longer allowed at town markets: they could sell their produce only to the landlord, who set prices as he willed.

Peter the Great's policy in the Baltic governorates looked like an attempt to test a slightly altered German-Swedish order on Russian soil (some Russian institutions, such as the exclusion of peasants from trade, were transplanted to the provinces).

Catherine the Great initiated the second stage — the gradual alignment of the Baltic governorates with the rest of the empire. Her approach was mainly *autonomist* with *quasi-centralised* elements. The transfer of Russian institutions to the new provinces accelerated. In 1782, the Baltic governorates became part of the imperial customs system. In 1783, the Riga and Reval regencies were established, their organisational model mimicking the rest of the empire.

⁶ CCLRE –1, vol. 5, no. 3271 (in Russ.).

In 1785, Catherine the Great's *Charter to the Nobility* was issued. It allowed the higher estates to sell, gift, and bequeath their property. The property of nobles sentenced for a crime was no longer confiscated by the state but inherited by their relatives. Landlords were allowed to open factories in their villages and sell the produce. Property rights were extended to minerals in the land.⁷ Local self-governance also underwent change: now, the empress inaugurated governorate and county-level noble assemblies that elected officials for local governing bodies and courts. The post of Head of the Nobility was created to manage estate affairs. Simultaneously, the stratification of the Baltic knighthood came to an end, and all layers of the nobility became equal in the *Landtags*.

In the same year, the tsarina issued *The Charter to Towns* regulating the status of urban dwellers and increasing their right to public representation.

Catherine the Great limited the autonomy of the Baltic governorates in the Russian Empire and eradicated the inflated dominance of the local aristocracy. From then on, the main centre of power was the executive and judicial bodies of the metropole.

After the Third Partition of Poland, the Russian Empire gained two more parts of the former Livonian Confederation: Curland and Latgale. The latter became part of the Vitebsk governorate. Thus, the *centralised* model of incorporation was applied. The tsarina granted the population of Curland the freedom of religion, the right to retain their property, and all the rights of Russian subjects. The Governorate Reform of 1795 divided the province into counties and established imperial governorate and estate bodies. The model applied in Curland was *quasi-centralised*.

At the third stage, Paul I switched to the *autonomist* model because of the growing military threat and the need to ensure loyalty in the Western territories. The system of administration returned to pre-Catherine ways (with some exceptions such as the treasury).⁸ Conscription, mandatory for the interior governorates, was replaced by an additional tax.⁹ These changes underscored the privileged position of the Baltic provinces and pointed to a modified institutional transfer.

The 19th-century agrarian and urban reforms marked a new stage in the development of the region. The government took interest in the peasant question

⁷ The Charter to the Nobility of April 17, 1785, *Nacional'nyj pravovoij Internet-portal Respubliki Belarus'* [National Legal Internet Portal of the Republic of Belarus], available at: <https://pravo.by/pravovaya-informatsiya/pomniki-gistoriyi-prava-belarusi/kanstyutsynae-prava-belarusi/akty-rasliyskay-imperiya/zhalovannaya-gramota-dvoryanstvu/> (accessed 04.07.2020) (in Russ).

⁸ CCLRE -1, vol. 24, no. 17584 (in Russ).

⁹ RSHA, F. 908, Op. 1, Storage Un. 215, L. 17 (in Russ).

primarily because of security concerns: possible peasant revolts near the Western boundaries of the empire were a dangerous threat. In 1816 in Estland and 1819 in Livland, peasants were liberated from serfdom but given no land. The landlord-peasant relations rested now on mutual consent. Peasants, however, could do only farming jobs. Their freedom of movement was also restricted: they were issued passports by the landlord.

Peasant self-governance — volost communities — emerged. The landlord tightly controlled the appointment, activities, and decisions of *elders* presiding over these bodies. Banishment from the governorate was prohibited. The peasantry was rapidly becoming stratified into large tenants and landless farmhands.

The reforms took into consideration regional specifics. The Code of Laws confirmed the *Ostsee* estate structure as based on property rights: manors in Estland could be bought only by local aristocrats, namely the so-called immatriculated nobility who had owned land under Teutonic rule. Landlords from interior governorates and local urban propertied classes could not purchase land in the provinces.

The urban reform of 1877 caused a transition from magistrates rooted in the medieval guild division to municipal dumas, whose members had to meet a property qualification. The reform undermined the power of the German *Buerger*.

The German aristocracy opposed these changes. It took decades for the 1864 Code of Laws to come into force (the 1864 law establishing local self-government [*zemstvo*] never actually did).

Two principles underpinned the Russian approach to integrating the Baltic region into its institutional system: the degree of autonomy depended on security concerns; the *Ostsee* estate structure remained intact and determined the features of institutional transplants. Despite many attempts to withdraw some of the region's privileges, the Baltic governorates retained certain autonomy. The institutions from the times of the Teutonic Order and later transplantations from two markedly different institutional systems (the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Sweden) helped the region retain its heterogeneity, which was never fully overcome by the Russian Empire, its centralism notwithstanding. As a consequence, the Baltic region became a source of westernisation.

Conclusion

The Baltic lands encountered different models of incorporation into another social system. Within the *centralised* model, the Baltic reproduced the institutions of the incorporating society. Modified institutions were transplanted to

the territory within the *quasi-centralised* model, whilst only selected modified institutions were transferred within the *autonomist* one. The principles, mechanisms, and instruments used for institutional transplantations depended on the institutional system of the incorporating state. For instance, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth focused on the nobility when transferring political institutions. Sweden used incentives and socialisation to transplant economic, political, and sociocultural institutions. Particularly, much effort was expended in limiting the omnipotence of the *Ostsee* aristocracy. At the core of the Russian policy was making the incorporation model dependent on the security factor and preserving the *Ostsee* estate structure.

The nature of state mergers and institutional transplantations depended on whether the incorporated territories had had a history of statehood. Another significant factor was the degree of similarity between the institutions of the acquired territories and the metropole.

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